THE GAY-DOMBEYS

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

J. A. M.

THE GAY-DOMBEYS

A STORY
COMPILED FROM LETTERS, DIARIES, NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS, SUPPOSITIONS, RECOLLECTIONS, ORAL INFORMATION;
AND THE PAPERS OF THE LATE
SIR EUSTACE MORVEN.

THE GAY-DOMBEYS

A NOVEL

BY

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

Author of "The Uganda Protectorate," "The Negro in the New World," "A History of the Colonization of Africa," etc., etc.

WITH A PREFACE BY

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PREFACE

BY the standards of the austerer school of critics this is certainly not a perfect novel. The rules that school insists upon, the rule of restraint, the rule of humourless statement, the complete suppression indeed of the author's personality, are utterly disregarded. But there are other, if less influential, opinions abroad in such matters. There have always been readers who were disposed to argue that in books, at any rate, negative virtues are defects, and the apologists for imperfection and lax ways, basing themselves on the long English tradition, can assert with some show of reason that in the novels most freely cited as exemplars, the solidity, gravity, and elaboration of the "treatment," varies inversely with the quality of the matter. But your common reader reads for matter. Here, in the book before us, the levity is all in the treatment. Sir Harry Johnston has to tell of very curious and intricate realities; he knows as thoroughly as any living man can know, the intimacies of that queer system in which court, foreign office, colonial office, family influence, financial powers, shipping firms, casual adventurers, inspired journalists, and the encounters of the London dinner tables and English week-end parties, played their parts in the expansion and administration of the empire of Queen Victoria. It is a world with whose exterior assumptions our distinguished contemporary, Mrs. Humphry Ward, writing from the woman's point of view and with a certain romancing touch, has familiarized two continents; but Sir Harry has lived the life, and so far from his laxities impairing his final effect, the easy carelessness of his presentation adds enormously to our final conviction of the truths in his picture. He tumbles out his story with something of the effect of turning out a drawerful of accumulated relics. Whims, instinctive and apparently aimless, take him off hither and thither; there is sheer fun for its own sake in this book, there are viewy passages and startling allusions to real people; when he feels like it he

discontinues his story and one or other of the characters obliges with a good long letter to carry it on ; at times the story goes right away and we are aware only of its eyes shining in the background while Sir Harry is indulging in some little irrelevance of his own. . . . Yet all through and in spite of all, the picture grows together. It grows together because it is a real story built up of real experiences, and warm (and sometimes hot) with passionate feeling. It is a story told by a man who has explored unknown regions and discovered unheard-of animals, who has led expeditions and fought battles, conducted scientific researches and governed great provinces, who is a painter and a philologist, and the liveliest and most irrepressible of educational reformers. It is quite conceivable that at certain points the reader will exclaim : " But this is not a novel ; it is highly refracted autobiography ; it is a cheerful commentary on the Empire before the flood of the great war ; it is a sketch-book of Victorian impressions ; it is a literary fantasia." They may take it at that. Whatever one may choose to think about it as a work of art, there can be no doubt that it is a book full of entertainment and giving us a long-needed picture of the brain and tentacles of empire at work in the days when the New Imperialism was brewing.

The freakish element—to some readers it will seem to be a most delightful ingredient and to some a very tiresome and skippable one ; it depends upon their knowledge and understanding of Dickens—is this, that Sir Harry, as even the title of this book indicates, has imagined nearly all his characters to be descendants of characters either in *Dombey and Son* or in other of the Dickens novels. Manifestly he believes—one is happy to be in agreement with him—that many of the novels of Dickens, and particularly that great masterpiece *Bleak House*—are a faithful record and picture of the broad relationships of English social and political life during the high Victorian times. They are not elemental stories, not studies of character, but broadly drawn pictures of a world. Dickens hardened and simplified his lines and intensified his angles and contrasts, as one must do whenever one attempts to bring a hugely intricate scheme into the compass of a picture ; he had the natural indignation of a patriot and the derision of an honest man ; and the shocked conventionalist, startled for a time out of his self-complacency, took comfort in the explanation that his presentation was " caricature." But these " caricatures " live for many of us as real as his-

torical characters ; more real indeed, in many cases, for we know more of their intimacies. When a writer presents a figure in a novel there is no need to make reservations or consider the feelings of survivors. We can still believe that Mr. Mantalini or Mr. Harold Skimpole lived, but who believes now, except upon unimpeachable documentary evidence, in the preposterous Beau Nash or the youthful Disraeli or the incredible Beckford ? And to Sir Harry at some time came the logical idea, that since old Dombey and Paul and the rest of them had so certainly lived and were so certainly *placed* in the British scheme, the family must have left descendants.

This book arose then out of a search, at once humorous and accurate, for the fruits and consequences of Dombey and Son and the Dedlocks and Verisophts in the England of Lord Salisbury and King Edward. Dickens, we agree, left a number of people established and getting on in the world. Well, how had they got on ? They ought to be, as schoolboys say, " all over the place " in a generation or so. The idea is delightfully freakish and delightfully sane. It has determined the form of the story completely. It is, so far as London and the relations of England to the colonies go, a sequel to Dickens. But Sir Harry Johnston is too vivid and insurgent a personality to ape another man ; he has his own style and his own method. And here one comes against a new swarm of objections that this book will certainly raise, and that is the manifest resemblance of many of the leading characters to real personages of Victorian political life. " No personalities " is one of the most emphasized rules of British " good taste " ; there are people who would like to apply it even to the arguments in our criminal courts, they would prefer to have modern history written in the style of one of those keys to big portrait groups in which each face is replaced by an egg-shaped blank and a number. But if we are to have something resembling the periods and phases of English political life, since it embodies neither ideas nor principles but only plays upon cants and phrases, since its forms are preposterous and its realities mute, we must go close to the actual personalities in the play. The only test of a mentally incoherent time—and England has been mentally incoherent for two hundred years—is in the people and public acts it tolerates and endorses. The political novelist is forced therefore to make his chief actors like the chief actors of the phase he depicts, because there is nothing else in the phase to present

it. He may have no desire to depict particular people, much less may he have that queer disposition to "show up" particular people, the gratification of which seems to vulgar minds to be his natural and enviable privilege, but the chief shapes of his picture must be like the chief shapes of the scene he renders, and similarly related, or it will be an altogether different scene. Sir Harry, for example, pursuing his relentless Dickensian genealogies, discovers a certain Josiah Choselwhit as the central and significant figure of the New Imperialism. He makes him the elect of Northampton, which I think is a little hard on a city famous for its excellent boots and agnostics, and in so many things is Josiah made to fill the dark indispensable outlines of a real British statesman, that it is difficult for any one who has not experimented in the same field as Sir Harry, to realize how strenuously he must have struggled to get away from just exactly what the uninitiated will suppose he was trying to get at. And again with Lord Wiltshire, whom Sir Harry evidently loves, as he loves the memory of Queen Victoria; like as the big figure is to a real and very impressive figure, it could not be less like without introducing a strangeness, an unreality into the whole political scene of that time. Baxendale Strangeways, for a third instance, Baxendale to many people will seem astonishingly like this or that journalistic meteor who shone upon the literary youth of men now middle-aged; but it happens he is also like two or three other journalistic meteors, a type and a compendium, far more than the portrait of the X or Y or Z that the ill-informed who happen to know only of X or of Y or of Z will suspect. Of course it is possible for writers with a lesser sense of the facies of a time and a greater intentness upon a personal story to write what are called "political novels," in which neither the actors nor the events nor the spirit of the time "date" in any way; in which a country only by convention and in its conventions England, moves under strange leadership to unknown destinies in a world unseen. This may be, it probably is, the purer art; but Sir Harry is no competitor in the realm of such artistry; he is passionately anxious to render us England in a certain real period and a certain real relationship, he is a realist of the spirit, and as I read over his manuscript for the fourth or fifth time I begin to question how he could have done it otherwise or done it better.

I question whether the mingling of certain social forces trivial in appearance but very grave in their effect upon the

destinies of an imperial people, could be more conveniently conveyed than by the mingling of letters, conversations and the brightly but exactly described social gatherings, the week-ends, the dinner and lunch parties, which make up this finally most convincing book. Sir Harry has used his own experiences with extraordinary freedom throughout, and the mechanical reviewers from whom all writers suffer, will no doubt when they are not saying he is a caricaturist, be saying that he is "autobiographical." All the way through one feels that he knows, one feels that he has "been there," and that will be very distressing and annoying to those mutually convertible types, the pure novelist and the pure critic, who know nothing and have never been anywhere. But it will be quite otherwise to the intelligent reader who brings his curiosity about things as they are to his reading. The fact that Sir Harry is abundantly, profanely, and unrestrainedly amusing must not blind us to the fact that he has succeeded in writing one of those novels that are history. The fact that there is scarcely a character in the book about which the curious student might not, with a show of justification, say, "based on so-and-so, with side lights from so-and-so and a touch of so-and-so," should not prevent our recognition that in Lady Feenix he has created one of the most real and delightful of modern heroines. This book is one of the best first novels I have ever read. Would that more men who have handled realities would write in the same fashion. I have long had a lurking persuasion that nearly any man of experience who cared to be frank about his business could produce at least one better novel than the sworn and addicted novelist. We have too many mere novelist's novels. Sir Harry does much in this book to rescue the novel from its present unhappy entanglement with the posings and pretensions of "art," and restore it to literature.

H. G. WELLS.

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THE GAY-DOMBEYS

CHAPTER I

THE DOMBEY DINNER

ON the 27th of May, 1887, Sir Walter Gay-Dombey was awaiting his guests in the library at 102, Onslow Square. It was nearly half-past seven, the windows were open, sun-blinds partly down, a delicious breeze streamed in from the private garden attached to the house. The garden was bathed in yellow sunshine from the westering sun. Faint shrill hootings came from the locomotives on the Underground not far away, and the clip-clop of hansom-cab horses was a reminder that you were in a city; otherwise the surroundings rather suggested some opulent villa in a comely suburb —Richmond or Kew; for the glimpses of the garden under the sun-blinds revealed a very green lawn, flower-beds of the brilliant "carpet" pattern, and the trunks of big trees. These were apparently limes. The breeze brought their fragrance into the room, where it mingled with the scent of the blue cinerarias and white trumpet lilies in the fireplace. Blue and white were the colours of the House of Dombey and Son, of the great Dombey Line of steamers, the "Flower" line, as it was also called.

Sir Walter was a man of seventy; rubicund, well preserved, upright, white of hair, whiskers, and moustache; but with youth still burning in his hazel eyes; and his front teeth all his own. To him there entered, as he glanced impatiently at his watch, his wife, a short slim woman of sixty-three, with sloping shoulders, violet-grey eyes, a haunting look of youth in her face and a certain naïveté of manner; as though she were constantly being deceived in people through over-trustfulness, as though she had consistently spoiled her children and worshipped her husband; as though even in the materialist 'eighties tears could easily rise to those kind grey eyes at any touch of sentiment.

Sir Walter was commenting impatiently on modern ideas

of punctuality, and she was trying to appease him and yet make excuses for every one; when, as often happens, the expected guests came in a crowd, and the old butler had much ado to announce punctiliously each in turn: "Mrs. Feeder," "Mr. and Mrs. Paul"— (Dombey being understood)—"Miss Knipper-Totes," "Canon and Mrs. Dombey," "Sir James and Lady Tudell," "Mr. Frederick Chick,"—a pause—"Sir Barnet Skettles,"—another pause—"Mr. Eustace Morven"; and a shy, bearded man with an air of foreign travel about him, stepped into the room and had some difficulty in distinguishing his hostess, blundering first on to the skirts of Mrs. Canon Dombey, and next colliding with the cold, statuesque beauty, Mrs. Paul Dombey. And now he was apologizing for being late! "Not at all, my boy," said Sir Walter; "you can never be as late as Suzanne."

During this twenty minutes of arriving and announcing there had sauntered or glided into the babel of talk a son and two daughters who lived at home—more or less: Perceval, Frances, and Lucrece.

It was nearly eight o'clock before the butler announced "Lord and Lady Feenix," and a large, beautiful woman, magnificently dressed after the fashion of the year (which conferred on women the figures of giraffes), came swiftly into the room, wrapped her mother in her arms, nodded first here and then there, and, taking Sir Walter's arm, said, "Darling Papa, it's your clocks that are fast, not I that am late; Tomlinson said, 'Dinner is served, melady,' the *instant* after he announced us: so take me in and scold me afterwards."

So they went in to dinner in a dining-room which was a realized conception of the æsthetic daughter Lucrece—walls of Pompeian red, a polished, black, wood-panelled dado, and a frieze of cream-white demarcated from the Pompeian red by a narrow fillet of black wood and from the carved stucco ceiling above it by a broad moulding of the same dark wood. There were large and small oil paintings hung symmetrically on the dull scarlet walls, triumphs of the R.A. in the 'seventies and early 'eighties: also, in an alcove that contained the fireplace, a few family portraits: a pompous, neck-swaddled picture of Lady Gay-Dombey's father by an unknown painter of the earliest 'forties (much hidden under brown varnish); a sketch—by no means bad—of the beautiful Edith Dombey, from the brush of Winterhalter, a three-quarter-length of Sir Walter recently painted by Wells, R.A.—a presentation

portrait subscribed for by the employés of the Dombey Line when Sir Walter was given his knighthood. This flanked a picture of his wife, which had just been finished by another painter : not a good portrait, for it made her look droopy-shouldered, preposterously over-dressed and little like her slim, kind, unpretentious self.

Eustace Morven found himself placed next to Lady Feenix, with Mrs. Canon Dombey, whom he had taken in, on his right. As he sat down Lady Feenix—Suzanne Gay-Dombey, before her marriage—looked at him for just an instant, taking in all his appearance in a flash and capturing his fancy at once by a charming smile. For her part, she saw a tall man—well-proportioned figure, dark brown hair going a little grey at the temples, moustache, short thick beard, nice eyes, age thirty-six or thirty-seven, and a face and expression which belonged either to a thoughtful soldier, a hardy explorer, or an athletic man of letters. Then she turned to receive her father's admonitions on her invariable lateness for everything : she was too late for *the* dinner of the year, the dinner of the 27th of May, the anniversary of the re-founding of her grandfather's House, the date on which Walter Gay had signed partnership with the broken man, the date on which he had added his wife's surname to his own.

Cornelia—Mrs. (Canon) Dombey—had turned an angular shoulder on Eustace and was talking across the table to Sir James Tudell, the Managing Director of the London and Bristol line. She was annoyed inwardly at not being taken into dinner by Paul, the eldest son of the house, who instead had escorted to the table her spinster sister, Susan Knipper-Totes. *Her* cavalier was a comparative nobody, a consul from foreign parts, whose only claim to be present that night was some trumpery discovery the papers were talking about, and the former connection of his father, Richard Morven, with the firm of Dombey.

The footmen having served the soup—clear mulligatawny—the butler was dispensing sherry. Lady Feenix, after restoring her father's good humour, turned to Eustace.

" I'm so glad we were put next to one another ! I've wanted to meet you for *years*, because I conceived such a great liking for your mother. I was so sorry when she died : three years ago—wasn't it ? Mother was quite upset because she hadn't even heard she was ill, and we all feared she must have been quite alone at the time. But you were just back before her death, weren't you ? "

"Yes, and my brother—a doctor—had already been with her. . . . And I've wanted to meet *you*, because she used to bring you into her letters and write about you in such admiration. But when I was last in England everything seemed to go wrong and I missed seeing every one of you except your brother Paul."

"How your mother would have rejoiced in the fame that has come to you now! All the newspapers are full of your exploits. Is it *really* true that you captured a cannibal chief in the midst of a repast on human flesh—or rather, wasn't it that you came on the scene and spoilt a Lord Mayor's banquet by releasing the victims before they were killed?"

(Eustace attempted a much less highly coloured version of an episode at the head of the Niger Delta which had gained him some distinction.)

"Shall you be in London for the Jubilee?"

"Yes—at least I hope so."

"Haven't the Irish members already moved an amendment to the Foreign Office Vote to reduce your salary by £100 a year because of your interference with natives' rights to eat what they liked when they liked?"

"Yes. But I suppose what they objected to technically was my deporting this particular chief, who has made himself a general nuisance by his raids."

"Well, it scarcely matters, does it, now that *The Times* has shown up Parnell in his true colours? But of course you've missed all that. You haven't seen the famous Letter. John—Feenix, you know—says it ought to *finish* Parnell. And he also says that Home Rule would be Rome rule: chiefly because it rhymes. But I don't know that I should mind that. The R.C.'s put so much more colour into life. By the bye, what are you? Still an Adventist like your people?"

"Oh no; I'm nothing in particular; I'm too puzzled about the Universe and the odd way things go on in this tiny fragment of it to possess any definite faith. . . ."

"I see. You're like me. I've almost given up stereotyped religion after reading Cotter Morrison's *Service of Man*."

(Canon Dombey, sitting nearly opposite, overhears and says in sonorous protest: "Suzanne!")

Suzanne, after a brief attention to some turbot on her plate, continued: "You know my husband's at the Colonial Office? We may reclaim you from the F.O. some day, when we take over your territories, and *then* I shall be your liege lady, so

to speak. You'll have to bribe me with orchids and strange birds to get a rise. I don't care for jewels, but I should like to have the only living Dodo or a four-winged bird of Paradise. Are there such things? By the bye, you must come to my Jubilee Party. The Private Secretary shall send you a card. Do you know Arthur Broadmead? Of course you do. He often talks about you. Such scandalous stories too! He says he introduced you to Bella? (Eustace feels and looks rather uncomfortable.) My sister-in-law can't hear me when I drop my voice like this: no one can except the person I'm talking to. . . . Yes, she was a Miss Knipper-Totes—sister to Susan K.-T., who is sitting between my brothers, Paul and Percy. . . . Oh, you *know* Susan? . . ."

"Only by correspondence."

"Dear me! How exciting! What ever made her write to you?"

"She wanted some information about vegetable fats."

"What *on earth* for? Sounds like Tennyson's 'vapid vegetable loves.'"

"It was a very practical inquiry, chiefly round the question of Butyrospermum parkii—cattle foods, I think."

"I *see*. Her brother farms in Essex. Well, her sister, your other neighbour to whom you positively must speak in a minute, when she has done with Paul—Cornelia—is the wife of my brother Solomon opposite, the Canon—dreadfully pompous, isn't he? Grandpapa all over again in a different way. The Knipper-Toteses—double-barrelled names are quite the fashion now—are the children of mother's maid-companion after whom I'm named, by the bye. Their father was very well off. He had a perfect infatuation for mother, and as he couldn't marry her he married her maid and then added her surname to his own—like Gay-Dombey, only reversed. He was rather a softy, but fortunately he died a long time ago. Susan, your correspondent, is a very clever woman, not married, strong-minded, wants a vote. She's a friend of John Stuart Mill and actually speaks on platforms! Cornelia, qui ne comprend pas un traitre mot de français, n'a pas l'air—What is it, papa? My whitebait? Of *course* I want it. Why can't one eat it with a spoon—There! Now they can take my plate. It was delicious. . . . (To Eustace) I was going on to explain our Christian names. They are an odd assortment, aren't they? But mother and father were quite the gratefullest couple that ever lived, and commemorated all their friends in their children's names. I

don't know why we are so prejudiced against mine nowadays. Poor mother, as I grew up, thought the French version of it sounded a little better than plain Susan. As to my brother opposite, Solomon, he prefers to style himself 'S. Edward Dombey.' He was named after a Mr. Gill that your father must have known well. Now I've monopolized you long enough; Cornelia's left elbow looks offended."

Then Suzanne, raising her voice, rallied Lady Tudell on the other side of Sir Walter about her bazaar at the Botanical Gardens for Railway Servants' widows and orphans; and Lady Tudell—a dumpy, over-dressed woman with an eczematous flush, revived by the Chablis she was drinking mechanically with the whitebait—tried to reply mincingly to her questions.

As a matter of fact the Bazaar had been another tragedy in *her* chequered life. The Princess, it appeared, had not heard quite distinctly the introduction effected by her lady-in-waiting and had mistaken for 'Lady Tudell' a handsome actress, Miss Delorme, who, all unasked, was helping prominently and successfully in the fete. H.R.H. had merely bestowed a kindly, smiling look on the railway magnate's wife, believing her to be some comic person of the Stage trying to look respectable for the nonce, and discarding the palliatives of paint and powder. Unfortunately the Graphic artist had fallen similarly into error, and the resultant picture had infuriated Sir James because the curtseying lady to whom the Princess (in a zebra dress) was extending her hand was so obviously his sister—relationship never admitted—and not his wife.

Lady Feenix was not teasing her unkindly—indeed she did not realize that the subject stung. When she tackled Lady Tudell on these occasions it was to draw her out, to bring her forward and make her assert herself against her overpowering husband.

This last—Sir James since the opening of the People's Palace—cast an angry eye on his inadequate wife, who could not take the rallying merrily, but stammered and dropped the whitebait from her fork and might even have given way to tears but for Sir Walter's denial of the whole ridiculous story.

Sir James Tudell had just been describing to Paul across the table the trial trip of a Nordenfeldt submarine steamer in the Bosporus, which he had been out to see at the invitation of the Turkish Government. The invention was one which could never succeed—he thought—and he would state why

—when at this juncture he broke off to look at his wife.

Cornelia Dombey, finding this subject uninteresting, turned at last to Eustace and asked him with her profile "when he was going back to Africa"—a question that always infuriated him.

"Never, perhaps," he answered crossly; "I've only just returned." "And did you see much of the missionaries," drawled Cornelia, hoping this would draw from him the usual flippant rejoinder and give her the opportunity for a pious snub. But the answer was a disappointment. "*Rather*; we had awfully good times together."

This annoyed Cornelia, who did not think missionaries were entitled to "good times"; they were predestined martyrs. So she began "The Canon says . . ." intending to quote some depreciatory dictum of her husband's; when Suzanne again intervened to ask Eustace if he had brought his pet chimpanzi to London. Yes, but he had deposited it at the Zoo. "Couldn't it come to my party. Oh! *do* say yes! Dressed, of course, in a becoming costume, like a page in attendance on you." Eustace, with a consciousness that Lord Feenix had put his monocle into his eye and was turning from Florence towards them, vetoed this proposition decidedly.

Canon Dombey, sipping with solemn gusto the port which had been served after the *selle de mouton, pré salé* (as it was styled on the blue-and-white-bordered menu cards), opined that there was no real relationship between the apes and man, Professor Owen had shown . . . Eustace hotly intervened as an evolutionist. . . . Frederick Chick threw a humorous remark to his neighbour Mrs. Paul and looked for a laugh, but only got a pained stare. Perceval Dombey drawled that no one at Oxford now believed in evolution. Sir Barnet Skettles murmured, as though it were quite new to the assembly, Dizzy's remarks about being on the side of the Angels. Florence said something to her daughter Fanny (who preferred to be called Frances) about dear Canon Twells of St. John's, who had admitted last Sunday that we must look upon the Bible as being English literature and not a scientific treatise. Sir James Tudell turned to Lucrece: "Come, Miss Lucretia, they tell me you're artistic and love colour: what d'you think of the Mandrill at the Zoo? Is *he* coloured enough to please you? Would you like to be descended from *him*?" And was looked through by her lambent eyes in silent loathing.

Then in a brief pause the weak voice of Mrs. Feeder was

heard saying that Aristotle had given but an indefinite description of the anthropoid apes ; nevertheless her son-in-law, Professor Winders-Grétry, thought he *may* have seen a chimpanzi, sent to the Mediterranean from the Upper Nile ; and had any one here noticed that wonderful little terra-cotta figure of the Ptolemaic period—a chimpanzi riding a zebra —which our dear Paul (her dim eyes searching for Paul Dombey) had sent to the British Museum ? During this discussion Lord Feenix had assumed his most sphinx-like expression, for the time had not yet come for any minister of the Crown to accept the Simian origin of Man.

He affected to be—possibly was—both a patron and a disciple of Science, but it was rather in the innocuous, non-committal paths of herpetology and horticulture. Yet his silence and his monocle in these discussions irritated his wife, who after fourteen years of wedded life was uncertain whether she had married a very clever silent man or a very cautious mediocrity. So she called down the table : " Now, John ! *You* wind up the debate and say whether Darwin's right or wrong. *Am* I an improved Monkey ? " But Lord Feenix, as though he had not heard her, asked Sir Barnet Skettles if he had seen that man Carl Peters when he was in Berlin.

Then with the Ice pudding the conversation switched off to a multiplicity of topics. Eustace had felt himself vaguely snubbed by Lord Feenix and so sat silent for awhile ; Paul, who had given him gallant support over the evolution problem, now talked of the Elswick works at Newcastle with Tudell ; Sir Walter asked down the table whether Sir Barnet thought Boulanger was going to arrange a *coup d'état* ; Lucrece and Suzanne had been to a Court Ball and had had a gracious smile from Her Majesty. They compared notes across the table : the Queen had of course worn a black dress, the only colour being the blue garter ribbon and the Star on her left breast : the sleeves were short and wide and trimmed with white lace. She wore a white widow's cap and her cinder-coloured hair was *en bandeaux* with a rather pink parting. Her arms were white and plump and she had splendid bracelets on them and SUCH lovely rings—*and* a lace handkerchief . . . " my dear, it must have been worth two hundred pounds." It was the one thing about her—they both said—that they envied.

Cornelia listened eagerly to all this. Her husband had been consulted about the ceremony in Westminster Abbey. Susan Knipper-Totes on the other hand talked across to

Frances about the Alcestis just given at the New Theatre at Oxford. Lucilla Smith had acted in it. What did she think of A. E. W. Mason as Herakles, Coningsby Disraeli as the serving man, and that young fellow Bourchier as Thanatos? Frederick Chick again tackled the Quaker icicle Mrs. Paul. Had she heard from America lately. Wasn't New York getting quite stylish—almost like another Paris? (Mrs. Paul said she took *no* interest in New York: her own people lived in New England.) But hadn't Mrs. Paul heard the terms New York had invented for the classification of belles at dances: "Debbies" for the débutantes of this season, "Tabbies" for those of some seasons past, and "Tarriers" for wallflowers and old maids?

Florence thought this classification *not* very kind. Mrs. Paul Dombey expressed no view, but asked Lord Feenix if the Government were not going to institute an inquiry into the recent Colliery explosions, which were getting worse and worse. Canon Dombey—no doubt in pursuance of something that had gone before which gave it a bearing—was overheard informing Lady Tudell that—ah—it had been computed by a German naturalist that a snail's pace was at the rate of a mile in fourteen days. Cornelia plunged also into natural history by a confused account of seeing Queen Kapiolani at the Zoological Gardens, and expressed her indignation that the Jubilee present from the Queen of the Sandwich Islands to the Queen of Great Britain consisted of a feather ornament "which had cost the lives of 2,500 birds."

Suzanne was deep in another low-toned conversation with Eustace Morven; when her mother, seeing that every one had eaten their early strawberries in sufficiency, coughed, rose, and tenderly convoyed old Mrs. Feeder past the long row of pushed-back chairs into the tessellated hall, and up the broad shallow stairs into the three drawing-rooms which had been prepared for a Reception.

When the ladies had departed, Sir Walter moved to the opposite end of the table between Lord Feenix and Sir Barnet Skettles, carrying along with him Eustace whom he put next to the Colonial Secretary. Paul and Perceval, Sir James Tudell and Canon Dombey segregated themselves and talked of shipping and politics, the anarchist John Burns (as he was then styled)—Paul thought there was much sound sense in his speeches, the others angrily differed, and were cross that that clever Mr. Asquith . . . who was coming to-night . . . had got him off. They spoke of the Kaffir Market, as it was

beginning to be called. Transvaal Goldfields were making many Liberals regret Mr. Gladstone's policy in 1881.

Sir Walter having gone through the insistence on refilled glasses customary in that day, and the servants having distributed coffee and cigars, Eustace was pressed to relate some of his more thrilling experiences. "We look upon him, Feenix, as quite one of ourselves, you know; because his father was a faithful servant and a partner of our House." Lord Feenix half turned to Eustace and said "Pray do," but not in an encouraging tone of voice; as much as to say, "Let me catch you forestalling a Blue Book or my report to the House of Lords." So he confined himself to a few trite remarks on the climate, the sport, and the products of the new protectorate, mentioning the wealth of the forests in rubber. "D'you mean *India* rubber?" called out Sir James, "we get all we want of *that* from Brazil; what *you* ought to produce is gold." Eustace fell silent.

Then Lord Feenix asked Sir Barnet if he knew the Tortugas Islands off the coast of Haiti. Sir Barnet knew of them, and his cousin had just written a book showing up the Haitian niggers. Why didn't we take them—the Tortugas—and stick to them? Afraid of the U.S.A.? Pooh! What could *they* do? And France? Yes. The French had just called England "La Grande Voleuse," and Boulanger had threatened an interpellation. "But, my dear Lord, he's a wind-bag—*He'll* never grasp the nettle—Too fond of the women——"

Sir Walter who was squeamish and knew what the Skettles' stories were like, once he opened his chronique scandaleuse, rose and said Florence was having a Party and they ought to go upstairs.

The three drawing-rooms were already filling with people and a great buzz of talk was arising. The Society that lived in Pont Street and Sloane Street, in Cadogan Square and Eccleston Square was represented, with a few personages from Eaton Square, Grosvenor Gardens, Mayfair, and Portman Square; together with contingents of artists from the Melbury Road and St. John's Wood, and the new painters' colony springing up in Chelsea. These were *raccolés* by Lucrece, who herself was a painter and had been through an apprenticeship at the Slade. (She had been christened Lucretia after her godmother, but hated the name. When she arrived at the age of twenty-one, like most people she surveyed her prospects and decided to be known as Lucrece, which at any rate was Shakespearean and slightly tragic.

Fortunately her brothers were out in the world and preoccupied, or they might have embittered her youth with the nickname " liquorice "—one that *was* occasionally used by fellow students when they criticized her rather sensuous " body-colour " studies and envied her wealth and opportunities. Her father called her " Lukey," and her mother occasionally ventured on a tenderer " Creasy," especially when she nursed her through tonsillitis.)

Several bishops with their bishopesses were at the party. They had foregathered round Frances Dombey. Frances—who was thirty-seven and disliked being called Fanny by her father—fancy a *Saint* Fanny !—inspired new-comers into the Dombey circle with a sense of mystery which they attempted to dissipate by putting prudent questions to the more habituated while waiting in the hall for a cab or " going your way " with some one else. She had a pale colourless face like her brother the Canon, large dark eyes with mournful rings round them ; she dressed always for the evening in dark velvets and white lace, wore conspicuously an iron, gold-enamelled cross and a sombre necklace which looked like—possibly was—an Anglican rosary. Her abundant dark hair was drawn plainly back from the forehead without a fringe, and dressed in castellated plaits behind. But though she moved about with a gaze that was unfathomable, there were no depths to be sounded ; there was nothing romantic or sad in her past. She had never had a love disappointment ; there was no clandestine marriage to be concealed. She found voluptuousness in the complicated exercises of her religion, and in secret ate too many sweets, which spoilt her teeth and her digestion. But she was an Egeria to unhappily-married deans and a generous donor to ecclesiastical charities.

After eleven o'clock Corney Grain arrived, and by half-past eleven was delighting the assembly with his musical parodies and spontaneous drolleries. When he was not performing, Oscar Wilde strolled about—too obvious a waist and too full a bust to please Paul or Sir Walter—and baa'ed out epigrams to his disciples. His *gibus* had a lemon-silk lining and he wore—it was only '87 remember—a lemon-yellow carnation in his coat-lappet.

By twelve o'clock the theatrical contingent had come—the Bancrofts, Henry Irving, John Hare, George Grossmith, Eric Lewis, Beerbohm Tree, Ellen Terry, Mrs. Bernard Beere, Lucilla Smith, and Arthur Pinero. W. S. Gilbert (taken by

most people for a retired and peppery Indian colonel) went about insulting admirers; and Arthur Sullivan followed, pouring balm on their wounds and making devoted friends in five minutes' talk. The two most beautiful married women of the season—Lady Maud Parry and Lady de Grey—sat together on an amber settee (Lucrece, when she revolutionized the decorations of 102, Onslow Gardens had "done" the large drawing-room in amber, ivory, gold and a little black). Sir Barnet Skettles drew out with delight the Parryan repartees, while the other sister delivered one or two snubs to the exuberant Sir James Tudell which would have slain the social career of most men, but only delighted that prosperous rhinoceros, who hoped that Du Maurier—listening to the music hard by—was taking notes for another Punch drawing. Du Maurier was wont at times to caricature him and he always bought the caricatures when they were exhibited. Notoriety was the breath of his life and brought much grist to his mill.

There were Rothschilds from the City who talked zoology with Professor Flower; Foreign Office officials mad about the Stage who clustered round Lucilla Smith; Oxford Dons who excelled Perceval Dombey in contempt for Dickens; Arthur Balfour—coming into note as Irish Secretary—discussed theology with Mrs. Humphry Ward; Henry Labouchere chaffed Miss Margot Tennant anent the "Souls"; great doctors set their own precepts at defiance by eating paté de foie gras and drinking champagne at the stand-up supper. (It isn't what a man does *occasionally* that hurts him; it's what a man does every *week*, they explained to scandalized patients); and Mrs. Van Rensselaer, in the dawn of modern palmistry, "told hands" to guardsmen and débutantes and actresses in remote corners under shaded lamps.

Then Antoinette Stirling sang "The Lost Chord" to Sir Arthur Sullivan's accompaniment, and the tears stood in the eyes of hardened roués, who vowed they would leave that little girl alone, go home and see the mother that bore (and bored) them. And Corney Grain restored merriment by giving his parody of the favourite ballad of the moment: Sahm day, sāhăm day, sāhm DAY I shall MEET you; though I know naht hwen orr hwere, Lisson Grove or Balgrave Square. But SAHM Day, Sāhm Day, etc., etc.

In short: Lady Gay-Dombey's party of May 27, 1887 was chronicled as a great success in the next issue of *Vanity Fair*. To Eustace Morven, driving home in a hansom at 1 a.m. and

humming softly, "Some day, Some day, *Some* day I shall *meet* you," it was a confused medley of impressions dominated by two distinct convictions: one, that Lady Feenix, with whom he had talked long in the conservatory, was the most beautiful and sympathetic woman he had ever met; and he winced at some of the older memories—and the other, that Lord Feenix did not like him.

CHAPTER II

THE YOUTH OF EUSTACE MORVEN

AMONGST the papers of the late Sir Eustace Morven which were handed to me by his literary executrix were the following notes of his early life, drawn up with a view no doubt to the publishing of an autobiography, should he think the world felt any interest in his career.

"Our name was at one time spelt 'Morfin,' but it really was Morven and always so written by my father, who was of Welsh origin. My father had the physical characteristics of a warm-hearted Kelt and the Keltic love of music. Or perhaps in the later knowledge of to-day (1914) I ought to write 'Iberian,' as indicating the swarthier, more emotional inhabitants of Western Britain and South-West Ireland.

"My mother, Harriet Carker, was of a different type. She sprang from a stock of Puritan forefathers of the London middle-class, the class that became prominent at the end of the seventeenth century, and worked laboriously in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in banks and offices, surgeries and legal chambers, warehouses and building yards. This excellent bourgeoisie had little outlet for Romance save in philanthropy and in the dreams and vagaries of religion. To them if they remained unemancipated (and when emancipated) as in the case of my Uncle James, they went to the Devil, the Stage was *taboo*, cards were the Devil's picture books, strong drink and strong language were reprehensible. Impurity of thought or deed was so dreadful as not even to be discussed in intimacy. Their women in consequence suffered much from their husbands without remonstrance.

"My mother, for instance, could hardly ever be got to allude plainly and without mystification to my Uncle James's commonplace lapse from the moral standard of his class, his dalliance with gilded vice in a Norwood *cottage orné*, his betrayed seamstresses, who were inevitably 'ruined' by his attentions. Men like him—his paltry history has become public property, so I have no shame in alluding to it—not only took advantage of light-natured young women, but

actually seemed to exult in their afterwards going to the bad and dying in depths of misery ; when quite a small provision of money might have set them up in respectability and brought about a marriage in their own class.

" Another uncle, John, was early found out in some act of small dishonesty, due, no doubt, to betting on horses or speculations in stocks and shares. His abstraction of money (with every intention to replace it out of his winnings) from the office in which he worked was made good by his family and condoned by the head of the House. My mother nobly devoted herself henceforth to making a home for him and keeping him straight. But these breaches of the laws of her caste—and very good working laws they were too—accentuated Harriet Carker's horror of sin and her natural craving for a very positive and emotional religion.

" In dressing and hair-dressing she adopted a severe style —black silk, lawn cuffs and collars, a little good lace ; and of course after her marriage she wore a cap when indoors. Yet as I remember her she was an impressive woman, with a nearly-beautiful, thin, ascetic face, pale blue eyes, thin pale lips, and hair that long remained a rich brown and looked darker under its flattening pomade. To me she always exhaled an aura of spirituality and almost freezing purity.

" My father had been Chief Clerk in the old house of Dombey and Son, West India merchants and shippers. My mother— to whom he had long been attached—married him when she was thirty-six. They had two children : my brother Harry, and myself, Eustace. I was born in 1853.

" My mother and her brother John had inherited all that could be traced and saved of my Uncle James's fortune— some twenty thousand pounds, after his debts were paid and his illegal dealings with his firm's securities atoned for. Furthermore, out of the interest received from the investment of James Carker's money my mother and Uncle John insisted on paying anonymously four hundred a year towards Mr. Dombey's support. This matter was arranged by my father, and Mr. Dombey believed that it came to him from the wreck of his fortune.

" Mr. Dombey, however, died in 1854 and my Uncle John soon afterwards, so that my mother then became the mistress of an income of a thousand pounds a year. And by this time my father was in receipt of a similar amount as a partner in the resuscitated firm of Dombey and Son. For their position in life, therefore, especially fifty years ago, my parents were

in comfortable circumstances. My father's one passion was music, which however he enjoyed inexpensively; and my mother's dominating interest was religion. On her Church and its propaganda she spent all she could afford out of her private income.

"When my parents first married they were vaguely Wesleyans, though they attended any Anglican ministration that was conveniently near and sufficiently Evangelical. But early in the 'fifties they—particularly my mother, followed a little reluctantly (I think) by my father—were specially attracted by the Church of the Second Advent. This religious manifestation had arisen from the preaching in the 'thirties of an Irish Presbyterian divine of wonderful pulpit eloquence, vivid imagination, and that something which can only be called 'inspiration' (it may be defined by a chemical formula in an age of more advanced knowledge). The handsome young Irishman—an early nineteenth century Chrysostom—had announced the Kingdom of God to be at hand and only allowed a brief period (reference being constantly made to Revelation, Daniel and Ezekiel) in which to constitute the Church of the Second Advent.

"Apostles were nominated by the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouths of transformed men and women: a banker, a Scottish peer, a solicitor, a clergyman of the Church of England, an accountant, and so forth. The Pentecostal gift of tongues was again made manifest; and immense, though decorously controlled, spiritual excitement was generated. The poor young Irish preacher died, after attracting the society of the 'thirties to hear his wonderful sermons in a hideous chapel-barrack in Bloomsbury (that quarter above all others where respectable hideosities are conceived and sheltered). The Founder of the Church of the Second Advent burnt himself out in consumption, but already seeing the Kingdom of Christ on earth opened to his vision in a Gower Street bedroom.

"Then gradually more worldly folk took the enthusiasm in hand and shaped it into a church that no comfortable citizen of good position need be ashamed of attending. The shrill prophetesses expended their spiritual gifts at private prayer meetings, and in course of time died out. The ritual of the Church borrowed much from that of Rome, for the Scottish peer-apostle was a great traveller, and family influence even enabled him to have an interview with the Pope. Details in the beautifully-composed Liturgy were borrowed from the Greek Church, after the Scottish nobleman had been to Mos-

cow. There were instituted in course of time a hierarchy of clergy ; acolytes ; and incense. Glorious organs were played by unbelieving organists of great talent ; Pugin architecture obtruded on colossally ugly Bloomsbury, or emerged from some thieves' quarter in unredeemed Westminster, or some dowdy Islington or Southwark square. Branches sprang up in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Newcastle, and even Bath and Brighton.

" To the mystical Scandinavians or North Germans, the teaching of these latter-day Apostles was as acceptable as the outpourings of Swedenborg ; but in the raw young United States the farcical competition of the Mormons drove the scandalized Adventists back to the Anglican, the Roman or the Presbyterian faiths.

" In my own land, the Emperor Napoleon III was the special stimulus of the Adventists ; and great was the consternation when he died in 1873 without having fulfilled the rôle of the Beast.

" But to me, in my boyhood, the teaching of the Adventists, still more my mother's interpretation of their gospel, became increasingly distasteful and disparate with the world as I saw it. At first, at the age of twelve, I liked being an acolyte in a white dalmatic and scarlet cassock, taught to prepare and reverently to pass into the priest's hands the incense in its splendid censer. I liked the long Sundays with their exotic flavour of Judæa, spent so much in church between one enthusiastic service and another, when little picnics of sandwiches, biscuits, sherry, and etna-made tea took place in the vestries and the corridors, while the clergy moved about in gorgeous eastern vestments which completely transmogrified the meat-salesman, the auctioneer or tea-dealer of everyday life ; or while in the intervals between the services they donned severe undress cassocks and talked in technical language of holy things.

" I liked being able after some unusually exciting prophecy from the blue-stoled prophet to slip into the large priests' vestry where there was a good reference library, read Alison's History of Europe and make out in the atlas the changes in political geography which would come about when the Ten Kingdoms of the Apocalypse were brought into being.

" I enjoyed at that age the spiritual pride of the consciously Elect. As I rode in omnibuses, with my feet in their frowsy straw, it thrilled me to think that if only the Last Trump or some other appalling supernatural summons sounded from

Heaven, I, with my mother (but perhaps not my brother Harry, who was too worldly) would soar up to Heaven without the pain of dying ; whereas all the other people in the omnibus (unless they were Adventists in disguise) would remain where they were, only able at best to enter immortality through the very painful gate of martyrdom. I did not object to the sermons lasting an hour-and-a-half, if only they dragged in the Emperor Napoleon and the Pope, or ' wicked, treacherous Russia ' or ' infidel France,' where Renan already typified the Higher Criticism.

" But as I passed through my teens, and was led into stolen visits to theatres and music halls by my Laodicean brother ; above all, as my interest in the wonders of this visible world grew and expanded with compound interest ; as I studied the flora even of an Islington garden and kept rabbits, guinea-pigs, a squirrel and a magpie in the disused stable of our house (which a hundred years before had been built as a country villa) ; as I was led on from these studies to an acquaintance with the Zoo and the stuffy old Bloomsbury Museum, and Kew Gardens and the Crystal Palace, and Wombwell's great menagerie whenever it came to spend Christmas at the Agricultural Hall : I grew to hate the restrictions imposed on me by this church which concentrated all its thoughts and aspirations on the problematical life of the world to come. What was the use, I thought, of God having created so sumptuously beautiful and thrillingly interesting a world as this planet, on which we led our mortal existence, if we were to give no heed to it, to spurn its pleasures, to prepare incessantly and wearisomely for something better but something very hazily defined and doubtful, since it only rested on the conflicting assurances of a little band of elderly or middle-aged men, obviously unacquainted with scientific research and non-Biblical history ?

" I half confided my doubts to my father, but he was the honorary choir-master at our church and wholly wrapped up in his music or in the accounts of his firm. He died after a short illness in 1864. . . .

" When I was fifteen, my mother, scenting the commencement of these boyish doubts, put into my hands as a Christmas present a work sugared over in the disguise of a story, which must have sown the seeds of disbelief in many another mind, besides that of Eustace Morven. It purported to be in the main the successful attempt of a good clergyman-uncle to rid his nephews of all excuse for doubting the Inspiration of

the Scriptures and to arm them completely against the growing 'infidelity' of the 'sixties.

"Unfortunately for its purpose the uncle was made to give a summary of the doctrine of Evolution in order to demolish it. And this summary was so splendid in its scope, so convincing in its truth (to my already acquired knowledge of Nature), that willy-nilly the six days of Creation and the arbitrary methods of bringing Man into existence went by the board. The Church services—and they were many, week-day and Sunday—the Church festivals, the prophecies of mighty changes that were never fulfilled,[1] became distasteful and at last were evaded or openly avoided.

"I had passed from a preparatory school in a northern suburb to a much bigger school in the heart of London. My mother, believing that the end of the world might come like a thief in the night and could hardly be postponed much longer, was almost indifferent to her boys' earthly careers. Harry the scapegrace was to be a doctor; I could also be a doctor if I liked, and if I was quite sure I would not study Adventist theology and enter the priesthood. She only implored me to remain pure in heart and deed and keep myself unspotted from the world; then gave me a latchkey and ceased to inquire how I spent my evenings.

"So I went to theatres and into the gallery at the Royal Opera, but got into no scrapes; I studied Biology and modern languages, and so impressed my teachers and friends of the New Learning that I was strongly advised to cram up for the pass examination into either Oxford or Cambridge and then qualify for the career of an Owen, a Hooker, a Garrod.

"But about this time it dawned on me that my mother was pinching herself to meet her sons' calls on her, and yet not give up the old spacious home at Islington which unconsciously she only rated less than the Heavenly Mansion to which she expected admittance before long.

"After her husband's death in 1864 she had capitalized his interest in the Firm and had withdrawn from it altogether. In this way she should have been endowed with sufficient means for herself and her sons' careers. But believing, as she did, the Second Coming to be so imminent that no provision need be made for a long earthly life, she gave recklessly to

[1] The Church of the Second Advent was, as a fact, only some forty years out in its foretelling of Armageddon; and its yearning for a second coming of Christ may well be fulfilled by the New Dispensation that seems to be dawning behind this horrible War.—*E. M., London, January* 31, 1915.

found Adventist Churches and Chapels ; just as before her husband's death she had made away with some of her own capital.

" An old friend of the family, who was a more worldly-wise Christian among the Adventists, intervened and imposed his advice ; otherwise my mother might have reduced herself and her sons to very narrow means. But even when her affairs were resettled to bring her in a comfortable income, there was still my brother Harry's education to pay for ; and very unwillingly she was constrained to lay out further capital in buying him a partnership as a practitioner. She could not therefore have afforded me a three years' maintenance at an expensive university and to support me afterwards during the long wait that might ensue before I could make a living out of Science. At least not without giving up her large house and hospitality to Adventist clerics, her Church charities : the things she most cared for. So I decided to content myself with London's University and the Royal College of Science. Some one there suggested to me a post abroad under the Colonial Office. I jumped at the idea. I might in such a post, in the tropics, indulge to the fullest extent my desire to be an explorer ; and study tropical nature as Kingsley had just done in his inspiring book, *At Last.*

" Most reluctantly my mother opened up relations again with the Dombeys. She had dropped them completely since her husband's death ; firstly because of the old, old Carker trouble which she had morbidly exaggerated as a sin ever to be atoned for by self-repression, partly because she regarded the amiable Walter and the quintessentially kind Florence as children of wrath, deaf to the message of her Church. Nevertheless she wrote Walter a letter and went unwillingly to take tea with them at Clapham Park. . . .

" Before long Mr. Gay-Dombey, whose line of steamers was already sending up our American commerce by leaps and bounds, obtained for me a colonial appointment in a derelict West African Colony. He announced his success to my mother almost ruefully—' It is called " The White Man's Grave," I hear ; and they say you can only keep alive there by drinking brandy and dosing yourself with quinine.' But *I* was delighted beyond measure. ' There are lung-fish in the rivers,' I remember saying ; as though that clinched the matter.

" This was in the summer of 1877."

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Morven's story is continued by a selection of letters.

CHAPTER III

BULOMBEL

November 16, 1877.

DEAREST MOTHER,—

I shall post this letter at the Canary Islands. I am beginning it as our steamer is entering the Bay of Biscay. We have had a dreadful time so far, since we left Liverpool. The *Bathurst* is a dirty ship of some three thousand tons which rolls sickeningly in the least swell. But the swell is nothing to the *smells!* There is a smell of warm oily steam that comes from the donkey engine, a disgusting, sweet, sickly smell, like prussic acid, in the filthy stuff with which they clean the brass things. (*Why have* brass odds and ends on a ship if they require cleaning every other day?) There is a smell of cockroaches in every cabin and strongest in the pantry; an undying smell of Irish stew in the cook's galley, a smell from the hold of rancid coconut which comes from the never-failing homeward cargo of oil-palm nuts; there is a body smell from the Kruboy deck-hands which, I am told, will haunt me all over Negro Africa; the pickled pork on the dinner table smells more disgusting than any decayed flesh in Lacrevy's pathogenic dissecting room at the Zoo; and there is even, when you go on deck, a smell of the sea itself that is quite different to what you expect when your only experience of the sea hitherto has been from a Channel beach where you get that heartening odour of ozone which only comes from decaying sea-weed on the shore. The smell of the open sea is—I think—horrid; simply a smell of brine, like what you get on your fingers after peeling shrimps.

I wasn't sea-sick from the rolling or the pitching, but from my first six hours with the smells on board. Ugh! the first regular meal we had! Didn't *that* turn my stomach—if you will pardon such plain speaking. I had hard work to keep back that pain in the throat that comes with unshed tears when I contrasted it with *your* simple, clean, perfectly cooked meals at Islington, and when I compared my frowsy cabin and horrid bunk with my lavender-scented bedroom at home.

Just for an hour or so I cursed myself for my folly in wanting to go out into the world, my infatuation for Africa. But only for an hour or so. I am all right now and wouldn't turn back for anything, not even for a hug from you.

The saloon is just the after part of the ship below the main deck into which all the first-class cabins open. There is no smoking-room ; you go on deck to smoke. At the farthest end of the saloon, in a sort of bay window, is a big square table on to which are shoved all the books and papers from the main table whenever they want to lay the meals. You are also thought to be able to play cards or draughts there after dinner, when you feel the screw or the rudder or something vibrating beneath you as though it was in your own inside, and the ship seems to be wallowing round and round in a dizzy circle—Ugh ! again.

Above the main table there is a swinging rack—or rather a rack which doesn't swing with the ship, if it did it wouldn't make you so giddy—on which are stored bottles of beer and whisky, gaudy-looking wines, liqueurs and any amount of glasses. Then there is a swinging lamp that adds another horrid smell to the others—a smell of colza oil ; and this lamp sometimes drips into my plate !

The food is *too* appalling, though I believe it is what the steward likes best at home—Liver and bacon, collops (whatever they are), sea-pie, toad-in-the-hole, pickled pork and semi-putrid salt beef, steak and onions (not so bad, but I am told the supply will soon give out), Irish stew of ram-mutton, with a taste of tallow. And for " sweets " : dumplings with black treacle (quite tolerable), roly-poly jam pudding—the jam being some speciality of Liverpool and made of anything but fruit ; and lastly, mitey Dutch cheese, oily tinned butter, ship's biscuits and bread. We get a few bananas for dessert, and these will assist me to support existence, together with the dumplings and treacle and ship's biscuits. The tea, coffee, and cocoa would require a special vocabulary of adjectives to describe them fitly. A new Dante should arise to deal with such an inferno as this to a sensitive palate. The tea is dried tea-leaves made with greasy water and served with Swiss milk that has turned to cheese ; the coffee I should think—from its taste—must be composed of ground cockroaches ; and the cocoa ! Oh, my ! It makes you sick to a certainty, with its floating, yellow fat-circles and its disgusting sweetness.

And this is what I have got to put up with for three weeks !

There are several "old coasters" on board, but they are philosophical; they smoke all day and drink quantities of stout and bottled ale and whisky and don't seem to mind. But the poor missionaries! I can't help being sorry for them (by the time I have reached this part of my letter—you will notice the break-offs in the handwriting—another day has passed and we are right out in the Bay). There are two men and a girl. If they attempt to complain the captain is rude to them, and jeers at the comfort in which they are supposed to live out in Africa. He says his Line doesn't cater for pernickety stomachs and doesn't want missionary passengers, any more than the niggers want missionary teachers. He does nothing to check his two officers at table or the "palm oil ruffians" (as they call the traders who are going to the Bights) from telling very doubtful stories which make the missionaries uncomfortable.

But (some more hours are gone by—we've had another awful tossing) the missionary girl has shown herself *quite* able to hold her own. She is, I suppose, twenty-five or thereabouts, and before she joined the Scottish Mission was a factory lassie. The two men belong to two different Missions; one is a Plymouth Brother and the other an English curate with a weak chest. . . . They were all ill for about twenty-four hours after we left Liverpool; then the Scotch girl came out of her cabin, and after three days they got up some sort of prayers in the early morning and late evening on the deck and sang dreadfully silly hymns together. When we had been four days at sea (we are now seven days out and shall be at Madeira in another day or two) the Captain called up through the skylight "to stop their confounded row; he wanted to play a game of cards and couldn't hear himself speak." Then the Scotch lassie let herself go. She called him names in her own dialect I had never heard before though I think you can find them in the Waverley novels She came down into the saloon to finish him off: said he was a filthy auld sinner, only fit to command a dirrty ship such as this was; said she wouldna stap herr singin' for the likes of him; that she only sang hymns to keep from breakin' her heart and prayed prayers to save the ship fra gooin' down, which it was the more likely to do for his wild steerin' seein' he went to the bridge most nights blind drunk.

My dear, it was splendid! She said all the other passengers had ever wanted to say; and the Chief Steward coming in at the close to find out what the row was about, got it too.

. . . I suppose it was only her sex that saved her from being put in irons, but my ideas about ship's discipline and first-class passengers are rather vague. We men however would have endured all I have related to you sooner than face a sea captain or cheek a chief steward. But the Captain said practically nothing ; only gave one or two uneasy laughs. And after Polly McGaskie, as she is called, had shut herself with a bang into her cabin and we had resumed our game of cards, she opened the door again and said : " And I've got yer hame address fra the engineer, an' I'll write from the first port to yer gudewife and tell her some o' the stories ye've bin speerin' aboot yer goin's on wi' the black girls." (Please forgive the note of coarseness.) This was a final bomb-shell. We all went to bed wondering what the morrow would bring forth (I have to share a cabin hatefully enough with a trader who is drunk every evening).

Off Madeira.

But nothing unpleasant happened in the morning. The Captain said " Good morning, Miss McGaskie," and she only tossed her head. A little later in their brief service she prayed aloud for him very movingly.

* * * * *

Madeira is as near Paradise as anything you can imagine, especially to a wretched man who has been nine days at sea on an ill-found steamer and not enjoyed one decent meal. I went up to Read's Hotel, on the advice of a passenger, and my word ! it was a treat. The garden where we had breakfast was something like the Palm House, Azalea House, Cactus House and Sub-tropical Fernery at Kew combined. *And* the bread ! *And* the butter ! And the tea and milk ! I made Polly McGaskie and the two missionaries come with me and stood them a jolly good breakfast. I felt I owed something to Polly. She has already made a difference on board, has frightened the Chief Steward into giving us better meals, and has had all the cabins well cleaned out, and made the surly captain quite good humoured with her droll remarks. She is most outspoken and has no squeamishness ; yet is never really vulgar or indecent. She has evidently seen horrors in the low parts of Glasgow and has little to learn in knowledge of vice. For drink she has a frenzied horror, because her father murdered her mother when maddened with whisky. When the Captain asked her why she hadn't stayed at home to convert the people there, she replied she

had left Scotland to avoid shooting the distillers. It was Africa or the gallows.

* * * * *

We called at Tenerife and are now just leaving Las Palmas (in Grand Canary). The Ship's Agent has kindly offered to post this letter, which I am finishing in a hurry. I spent a day inland at Grand Canary. The scenery was *fascinating. Such* strange vegetation! Neither tropical African nor like that of England or even Madeira; but something (I have read) like what Europe possessed before the Ice Ages came.

After we leave here we have four days of sea off the Sahara Coast and then we should reach Goree round the corner of Cape Verde in *real* Tropical Africa.

Your loving Son,
EUSTACE.

Port Liberty, Bulombel,
December 24, 1877.

DEAR PROFESSOR LACREVY,—

I told you just before I started I would give you my first impressions of tropical West Africa. We only caught an occasional glimpse of the Sahara coast. The sea after we left Madeira was tolerably calm, whipped into short waves by the trade wind; the sunsets were gorgeous, an experience so wonderful that they made me forget the horrid discomforts of this ship. I was asleep in my bunk among the cockroaches and the rats (the steward after much urging says he will rig me up a swinging cot on deck; I have a drunken fellow passenger who is occasionally sick over my face as he lurches into the cabin!) when we approached Cape Verde, and only saw it in the distance with its three or four baobab trees as we lay at anchor off Goree. This is a picturesque little island covered with red-roofed houses; once Dutch, then English; now French. The people of the country are a splendid race of negroids—the Wolofs. When on shore I saw in the market hundreds of cages of tiny waxbills for sale, especially that delicious little blue and grey one scarcely larger than a wren and just what you would take for a well-made toy. The cages made of coloured reeds are nearly as dainty as the birds. There were barbets, too, and Senegal parrots (stupid looking, but an attractive mixture of green, brown-grey, and azure blue, and unexpected dabs of red). These looked much like undeveloped Amazon parrots, and reminded me of your theory that West Africa and Brazil were once connected by a land

bridge, and that the American parrots came from Africa. . . .[1] There were also huge and fierce baboons on a chain or in cages, awaiting transport to European animal dealers. You could nearly always make friends with them—the purser shewed me—by smacking your lips and saying "Um-um-um-ma!" This is the greeting of all the baboon tribe and even extends to the allied Mangabeys, as I have since discovered. . . .

* * * * *

I am continuing this letter just as we are leaving Portuguese Guinea a week since my landing at Goree. I shall have been an unconscionable time getting to Bulombel, but I don't suppose the C.O. minds. When I found the *Bathurst* was a slow steamer calling at almost every port, I was sad, until I realized what a privilege this really was, and what unlooked-for opportunities it gave me for studying West Africa. And so far from resenting the long stay we have made at the calling-places I have exulted in it as it enabled me to be away from the beastly steamer, to get decent meals—I'd far rather have a negress cook than some awful scallywag from Liverpool in the galley—and to escape from uncongenial companions.

We had to call at Bolama to land a large consignment of building material (boats in sections, and what not else, from Madeira and Portugal); and the captain let me know that we might have to wait there to fill up with ground nuts and other country produce, so I had six days to dispose of, and didn't I dispose of them well!

Bolama is the headquarters of Portuguese authority in this part of Guinea. It is a rambling town on the north side of a largish island close to the mainland—an island fringed with tall mangroves, and densely forested inland with magnificent trees. The Portuguese claim all the coast of Guinea between the Rivers Cacheu and Cassini, and especially the basin of the Rio Geba. Since Stanley's magnificent journey and Cameron's, the Portuguese have endeavoured to assert some sort of authority over these islands and river mouths of Guinea, lest they are claimed by some other European power.

There is a Portuguese lieutenant here with a small force of ragamuffin soldiers (mostly convicts from the Cape Verde Islands), and he is busy building barracks and laying out a civilized town. He came on board in full uniform, gave our surly captain a military salute and inquired in French about

[1] I cut out the too technical paragraphs in these papers, as they have already appeared in E. M.'s writings on the African fauna and flora.

the consignment from Madeira. Of course the Captain—why are we like that?—replied rudely, saying he didn't understand any foreign lingo and the Portuguese must ask for what he wanted in plain English. So I volunteered my services as interpreter. In return the lieutenant asked me on shore to visit him.

It was rather an eye-opener, my dear Professor! Of course I knew more about Portugal than our steamer captain, and I had even learnt a certain amount of Portuguese at King's College in my passion for languages—an acquisition that so delighted my lieutenant that he could not expatiate on it enough, though French had to serve for our intercourse whenever we wanted to talk business. You will wonder what business, and why I had an eye-opener? It was ornithology, your own most special subject; and the eye-opener was to find a young Portuguese soldier (I think his rank is "Alferes," and I call that vaguely "lieutenant") educated in such a modern way. He was at Coimbra—their Oxford—and a pupil of their great man of science whom you used to quote—Barbosa de Bocage. He wanted to come to Africa just for the reasons *I* did; but he laughed and said there were lots more of his nation like him and much better educated. It was his government that was in fault, given up to all sorts of corruption and largely in the hands of the Jews. He told me awful things about Cabo Verde and the Governor there, who spent on himself much of the funds that were voted for the development of Portuguese Guinea and only provided Guinea with convicts for soldiers.

However he—the lieutenant—was of the right stuff and a hopeful symbol of Young Portugal, burning to rival the great conquistadores and explorers of the past. He had only been a year and a half at Bolama, but he had done wonders. He had managed to get from England a small steamer in which to explore the river mouths and visit the great Bisagos archipelago that covers the approach to them from the open sea. Before that the natives of this archipelago had been pirates, but they were so much impressed by the paddle-steamer and its guns that they have promised good behaviour henceforth. . . .

Bolama has quite an inviting appearance from the river, the houses being mostly white with red-tiled roofs, or else all of red brick and tile, and positively embowered in vegetation. The soil is intensely red and the grass intensely green. Outside the town are still lagoons of clear water that reflect

as in a faultless mirror the splendid wall of forest on their banks. I was surprised to see so many houses, having quite a Moorish look, with their long arcades and their interior patios planted with orange trees round a well (and swarming with pets, after the manner of the animal-loving Portuguese —spur-wing geese, baboons, monkeys, chimpanzis, parrakeets) ; but Alferes Alpoim tells me that an important element in the population here and at the river mouths is the " Grumete." The Grumetes are half-castes, mulattoes ; descended from the Portuguese settlers and slave-traders of past centuries who married Negro or Fula women and left an abundant progeny behind them. It is these Grumetes that have given Portugal such a hold over this region and established Portuguese as the trading language (though Pidjin English is beginning to compete). Some of them grew quite rich over the Slave trade till we put it down, and that was why they built such fine houses.

This is a prime country for Natural History and Ethnology ! In the market-place of Bolama you see such contrasts in African types. Beside the rather Moorish looking Grumetes (the female Grumete knows how to dress ! Such bright silks and cottons !) there are the yellow-skinned Fulas, with long ringlets of black hair and—in the men—peaked beards and thin moustaches. The profile of Fula men and women is sometimes Egyptian, and altogether they look very B.C. Often they are quite handsome and have such melting gazelle-like eyes. Their dress is picturesque and ample, and generally of coarse, thick, native cotton cloth, stained dark blue or woven in bold stripes of blue and white. The men wear turbans like Arabs—green, white, or red ; the women (such splendid figures !) usually dress their hair in a helmet-shaped chignon, or in long ringlets held back by a tight blue kerchief. The Mandingos—also Muhammadans—are more swarthy, but some have quite handsome Oriental features, and others look like the black Takruri magicians in the Arabian Nights, with their greegrees and amulets. The young Mandingo women are positively seductive, and plumper than the female Fula. These last are very shy of the European, whereas the Mandingos are ready to laugh and talk and chaffer in trade, and flash at you such white teeth between their full, purple lips. They are draped in splendid colours and in silk or velvet stuffs if they can get them. And they seem to be able to sport the velvets of Lyons, which are brought here by the French traders to exchange for ground nuts, the commerce

of this region. (The ground nuts go to Marseilles to be made into "olive oil.")

Well then, beside these more-or-less-Orientally clothed Grumetes, Fulas, and Mandingos, you see in the market place and streets of this town absolutely naked, very black natives of the islands and coast countries—Papels, Manjagos, and Bijogos. I can't say the Papels haven't a stitch on, because they *do* decorate themselves with a few gaudy tabs of red or white cloth, but only for adornment. However, they are as unconscious of being indecent as our mythical first parents, and nobody has as yet pointed out to them that we have long been driven from Eden. The Bijogo women have perhaps just realized this fact, because they fasten round their waists petticoats of leaves or grass. . . .

Finding the steamer would be here for a long stay the Lieutenant invited me to put up at his house and go on an excursion with him up the Rio Geba. His establishment was a picturesque one. His housekeeper (whom he introduced under a more affectionate title) was a handsome young Grumete, with an olive skin, good features, barbaric earrings and a modest manner, who wore, when not cooking or washing clothes, a robe of blue purple and a crimson silk bandana kerchief round her neatly dressed and glossy hair. . . . She assisted to serve, but didn't share our meals, and with similar lack of intrusion attended quietly to the requirements of my bed-chamber. The bed linen was exquisitely clean, and I cannot tell you *what* a relief it was to get away from my ill-smelling, cockroachy bunk on the ship and stretch my limbs between these cool, snowy sheets. I was even provided with the means of a bath. Two stout negroes brought in a cask sawn in half to make a tub, and huge rum bottles ("demi-johns") of hot water.

My bedroom looked out on to a broad verandah over which grew fruiting passion-flowers ("Grenadillas") and mauve Bougainvillea. Long-tailed, ringnecked *Palæornis* parrakeets, which had either got loose from captivity or were tamed wild birds, played all day amongst these creepers and dug their crimson beaks into the grenadillas. Whilst we sat at meals two tame piglings, boldly marked with yellow-white and brown, the young of the Red River hog, trotted in and out of the salle-à-manger ; brown and green *Pœocephalus* parrots, ring-necked parrakeets, small brown-grey parrots with purple-red tails, and darling little love birds climbed up the table-cloth on to the table and disputed our bread and our fruit

with us. Large spur-wing geese strode in to the ground floor rooms without any fear, and in the courtyards there were harnessed antelopes and dainty little duikers ; besides the plump little nanny goats that give us milk, a magnificent maned ram (black and white), several mongrel dogs and measly thin-tailed cats. Verily the Portuguese *are* fond of animals ! The Grumete woman was constantly inveighing against this disorderly menagerie in Creole Portuguese because of the dirt they brought into the house, the thefts of food, and their noisy quarrels ; but my host said he loved their society and hoped I did the same. . . .

But I was going to tell you about our trip up the Rio Geba. We started early one morning in the little paddle steamer of which my host is so proud. It is English-built—symbol of the ancient alliance between the two countries, he grandly said—but is named the *Vasconcellos de*—something or other —the name of some Portuguese big-wig. It is very tremulous and rather jarring to the nerves, and not, I should think, over seaworthy ; indeed, before we got well into the Geba estuary —but we *did* get in all right and back again, so why should I asperse my floating home for three never-to-be-forgotten days ?

When we ascended above the mangrove belt the scenery was surpassingly lovely. But even the mangrove part was picturesque in a way—the white-grey trunks with their crown of dull green, willow-like foliage, from which descended perpendicular string roots and root-like seed-vessels ; each trunk supported on an immense number of arched, grey-white roots which formed a miniature arcade along the river bank. In and out among the mangroves were luxuriant Raphia palms and huge-fronded water ferns. Grey-green and black Colobus monkeys leaped from branch to branch, hideous crocodiles slept on the mud, quaint small herons perched immobile on the mangrove roots and made sure by keeping quite still we should not see them ; and black, flesh colour, and white Angola fishing-vultures (you say they are *not* true vultures, but never mind) stared at us from the upper branches, too confident of not being shot at to fly away. I saw at first numbers of slime-coloured creatures, like elongated frogs, hopping about the mud and up the mangrove roots. But they were not frogs ; they were a kind of gurnard fish which lives as much as possible out of water.

It was, however, above the mangrove belt and the brackish water that the full splendour of Tropical Africa burst into

view. Glorious forest trees grew close down to the water's edge, except where there was a clearing and a native village surrounded by banana groves. Some of these trees rose into the air with a white columnar trunk full two hundred feet, and then expanded into a crown of foliage. Amongst the foliage of many were lamp-like blossoms of glowing crimson. Other trees were nothing but immense mounds of green velvet foliage. The acacias had light green trunks and branches, and pinnate leaves like a maidenhair fern. A heavenly honey scent came from their blossoms—little balls of golden fluff. Many of the trees, great and small, were overgrown with creepers that had burst into masses and mantles of scarlet flowers, orange flowers, white flowers, or flowers and bracts that were red-mauve, pale lavender or pinky white. The oil palms had fronds resembling huge green ostrich plumes; the coconuts were harsher in texture and a very light glistening green; and their fronds were beset at the base with enormous, ribbed, green nuts. . . . It was a paradise for the bird collector. Flocks of long-tailed parrakeets and love birds and two sorts of short-tailed parrot; splendid touracos—purple and green with crimson pinions, and the big fellow of their family, the Great Blue-Plantain-eater that the Grumetes call *pavão* or "peacock"; black hornbills, grey-crested hornbills, golden-green cuckoos, kingfishers—tiny, like amethysts, sapphires and topazes in colour; middle sized, black and white; and large, black, speckled and chestnut—bee-eaters, rollers, white-and-chestnut fish-eagles, brilliant blue and purple glossy starlings. . . . I saw most of these birds so close—never having been shot at, they were tame—that I could identify them easily.

Some of the riverside towns we stopped at were interesting, though the people looked decidedly truculent. But there was nearly always some Grumete trader in semi-European dress that acted as go-between and carried on a conversation in the most courtly Portuguese with the Lieutenant. Here one saw slave-traders from the distant Sudan, armed with long-barrelled guns and Mandingo swords, and I believed I caught sight in the market places of a "coffle" of slaves fastened together and waiting under some shady tree the order to march northwards. There were long-horned cattle from the Niger and roman-nosed sheep with short horns and long manes, and innumerable goats and pariah dogs. Among the different types of black people were fierce, lithe, handsome negroes called "Balantes," "dont les mœurs sont déplorables,"

said my host. They had probably come to the river-side to sell slaves to the Mandingos. . . .

On the second day of our excursion we reached a point above the junction of the Geba and the Rio Grande, and *this* was the culmination of my delight. I saw a spectacle I shall never forget. The river banks were not inhabited just here ; the country was given up to wild nature, and guns being seldom or never fired at anything, neither bird, beast nor reptile took much notice of the steamer's approach. This is what I saw and actually sketched, as we came very slowly up stream against the current : On a sandbank in mid-stream lay a mass of large crocodiles sprawling over one another and basking in the sun. Close to them, daintily pluming themselves, were clustered saddlebilled storks and other stork-like birds with curving yellow beaks (I should say at a guess the Rosy Tantalus). In the middle distance, both on a sand island and sandy beach were enormous hippopotami asleep in the sun. The river in mid-stream was full of hippos, their bodies half-submerged—yawning, blowing, sham-fighting with their gleaming tusks, baby hippos riding on the backs of their mothers—and great bull hippos strolling on shore to feed among the reed beds. The river seemed blocked with hippos. On one side a feathery acacia spread its green branches glistening with white thorns and served as perch for quite a hundred egrets—white herons—while the smaller twigs that hung over the water had many weaver-birds' nests depending from them. In and out of these grass receptacles (marvellously woven, like conch-shells in shape) flew and fluttered black-and-gold and brown and flame-colour weaver-birds. Even to such a detail as the butterflies, that delighted to settle on the wet sand and suck—they were scarlet, or iridescent blue-green, grass-green, black and white, brown and mauve, black and orange, lavender and pale green, purple-black with one white spot, or black trimmed with emerald. Here, I felt, *was* Tropical Africa summed up for me, and I doubt whether I shall ever again see it done so perfectly : our own colonies, I am told, are getting too sophisticated and inhabited.

We went no farther, because above this point the river was inhabited by savage cannibals of some unknown tribe that shot poisoned arrows indiscriminately at all comers and desired to make friends with no stranger. So—my time also being up—we turned about and steamed back to Bolama. I went once more on board the *Bathurst* and without further incident

reached the Korel river in our colony of Bulombel and landed at Port Liberty to take up my official duties.

* * * * *

EUSTACE MORVEN.

Port Liberty, Bulombel,
January 1, 1878.

DEAR PROFESSOR LACREVY,—

I have decided *not* to keep a diary. I shall take any amount of notes, but if I wrote down my intimate thoughts and my opinions of people and it was read by some unscrupulous person—and they are not nice about such things here—when I was away up country (if I ever go !) or after my death, the consequences might be disagreeable. So every now and then, as I must talk freely to some one, I shall send you a huge letter and you can read it or not as you like. But keep them for me—these letters—against my return. I would address them to my mother, but her views on some subjects are not mine and I cannot let myself go. A whole category of subjects is classified by her as "not nice," or "not in accord with Holy Scripture," and is ruled out of discussion even in one's own mind.

If you got my last letter you will have noticed it was dated "Christmas Eve." I really finished it before we came to anchor, and posted it on board ship, as the *Bathurst* was to transfer mails to a home-going steamer.

I landed at Port Liberty about 11 in the morning. It was hot, though it is the beginning of the West African winter or dry season. I did not like the look of the place. Let me try to describe my first impressions. No proper quay, though the British have been here for eighty odd years. A bank of red clay rises in tiers of rough steps from the shore of the estuary, and above the bank you see an ugly town of very heterogeneous character—brick and stone buildings like dissenting chapels or schools of Churchwarden Gothic, with negro houses interspersed—either mere hovels or fantastic erections (out of the perpendicular) with verandahs and brightly painted doors and windows. Beyond the town, the land rises into bushy hills and forested mountains—soil very red, vegetation too green. The mountain tops were hidden by a low-lying cloud bank suggesting rain always ready to fall.

Nobody came to meet me. The Customs officer—a repulsive looking Negro—and the Sanitary officer—a dejected Scotchman with a green complexion—merely yawned and

said, " Just so," when I introduced myself as the new Assistant Secretary and asked if I ought to go at once to Government House. However, I left my luggage behind at the Customs while I walked up to the Governor's residence. But the people in the streets were a nightmare, something too serious to be funny, a comic opera overdone, ironically bitter. They took no notice of me ; I felt, because I was poorly dressed compared to them. *Such* clothes. Stout negresses in the latest fashions from " home," compressed into tube-like dresses of vivid colours, exchanging the time of day in most elaborate language with black gentlemen of Grandisonian manners, clad in long and tight black frock-coats, with enormous white shirt cuffs gorgeously linked, high-collars, bows or fold-over ties of parrot tints and lemon or lavender kid gloves, and chimney-pot hats which they took off with a flourish. Their boots were of patent leather with pearl-buttoned uppers. Of course this was the *haut ton*. The middle or trading class was at any rate more comfortably clad. The women had very ample skirts and brilliant kerchiefs round their heads instead of the too laughable bonnets and false hair of the aristocracy. Their men-folk wore cast-off military uniforms or ill-fitting suits of white duck or broad cloth. Then there were the lower classes—Kruboys, they call them—with no clothes at all except a skimpy cloth about the loins. Such were referred to most witheringly by any lady in gay attire whom they jostled as " Yah ! You bush-nigger. Why you no look where you'm gwine ? " The only forms which pleased the eye were the grave and dignified Muhammadans from up country, with their neatly-embroidered white caps, their ample robes of native-dyed cotton and their sandalled feet.

The Governor's residence was a ramshackle house of no particular style with an overhanging roof, standing in a park-like garden inside a crumbling wall. At the main entrance was a sleepy black sentry in a Turco uniform. He put no question to me, so I walked in to a dilapidated hall. After some time a black butler came, wearing a dirty white jacket. I explained who I was and he took me upstairs to the first floor and left me in a dark anteroom (where I was at once attacked by mosquitoes) while an embarrassing conversation was carried on with the Governor (Sir Joseph Bagstock) in an adjoining apartment, as to whether I should be admitted then and there. The Governor said it was a dam' nuisance ; however he wasn't going to put himself out for any one. So

I was ushered in and my name carefully mispronounced by the black servant as " Massa Moffin."

The Governor was—frankly—not a prepossessing person, and in distinct undress, as though he had risen from his couch and only got half through his toilet. He explained he was just recovering from fever, and having expected me a week ago had given me up. " Thought you'd turned tail at the news of Yellow Fever breaking out on the Coast." [I never got as far as being a doctor, but my brother Harry would have diagnosed *his* complaint—at the moment, at any rate—as an overdose of alcohol, to judge from the spirituous aroma that he exhaled.] However, I tried to explain all about the much-delaying *Bathurst*. He yawned and cut me short. " Luncheon's as near one as my cook will make it. Johnson will show you your room. You'll live here—at any rate for the present. The Colonial Secretary is down with fever, so you'll have to do his work as well as your own for a bit. . . ." At this moment the A.D.C. came in. He was a not-ill-looking young officer of the West India Regiment, but with a countenance suggesting much dissipation. He went up with me to my room and said I needn't trouble about the Customs. He would send an orderly and some porters to bring up my luggage. He also offered to show me the geography of the place—an uninviting bath-room where I saw a scorpion on the wall ; and—with chuckles and nudges —a backstaircase which led eventually out into the servants' premises and the street and which I should find very convenient if I wanted to receive nocturnal visitors. " His own room was in the same wing, but I shouldn't find him an inquisitive neighbour, this was Liberty Hall, etc., etc. . . ."

A week later. It is of course kind of the Governor to let me live in his house and eat at his table. But I must confess I should be very glad to be independent. The difficulty is quarters. There are only a few Government houses and they are all occupied and the barracks are too far away. There are bold mountains a few miles off that rise two or three thousand feet above the coast land. Why on earth the Government buildings are not all erected there with a practicable road connecting them with the beach, I cannot think. The whole place seems sunk in a miasma of don't-carishness, a stagnation of unhealthiness.

The actual " colony " consists of a long strip of unhealthy coast and a few islands. The interior is virtually unknown, and nobody seems to want to open it up, though it would

lead to the sources of the Niger and must be awfully interesting, judging from the native types that come down to trade. . . . But the Governor snubs me with blunt answers, and yawns when I venture to raise such points. I am a sort of private secretary to him. He dictates his reports and correspondence to me and I write them out. This occupies the mornings. We begin work often at seven in a desultory fashion, the Governor in a loose dressing gown and trousers and slippers, with tousled red-grey hair and blood-shot eyes. . . . You may well wonder how he rose to this position. I gather from the Colonial Secretary (who hates him) that he comes of a West Indian family that had great influence at the C.O. He was really a doctor to start with. Then he came out to the Gold Coast in the 'sixties and lived through an epidemic of yellow fever, till he accumulated nearly all the high offices in his own person by becoming Acting this and Acting that. At last he became really *de facto* Colonial Secretary. Then he did rather well (he is a dogged, courageous person, entirely without manners or charm, but afraid of nothing) in the Ashanti war, and when that was over he was made Governor of Bulombel. But he is my despair. He cares NOTHING whatever for science or for Africa; merely looks upon service in the White Man's Grave as a gamble with Death. If he can only stick it long enough he will be able to retire on a pension and his savings, and return to St. Kitts or some other part of his beloved West Indies where the Bagstocks have derelict estates. I believe he has a wife who lives there while he is in West Africa. And in his consolations for her absence he is as varied in his choice as was the Sultan before he met with Sheherazadé.

Of course when I came out here I had all sorts of romantic notions about becoming a great explorer, another Winwood Reade. But W. R., who as you know died a year or two ago, in spite of official discouragement *did* get to the sources of the Niger. When I hinted I should like to do the same, the Governor came down on me like a sledge-hammer; said I was here to work and not to play—he hates any mention of Winwood Reade or any writer on Africa—says their books are all dam' lies, that one nigger is very like another nigger and making botanical collections won't help trade. . . . Of course what brutalizes every one here—rather in the sense of the French *hébêter*—is the appalling heat and the deadly unhealthiness. According to the Colonial Secretary it doesn't matter *what* you do or don't do, you are bound to be ill with

fever or dysentery. But surely—the town is much unhealthier than it might be if it were not so full of filth and refuse which rots and stinks in the sun? Out of my bedroom window I see flocks of a small brown vulture perched on every high roof-ridge. They are there to feed on the garbage which no doubt in some way taints the drinking water. Then the mosquitoes. . . . Do you know? I *can't* help thinking mosquitoes and fever are in some way connected, though the Governor pooh-poohs the idea. I have been here nearly two months and haven't had fever yet. I have a sensitive skin and take jolly good care the mosquitoes shan't get inside the net round my bed, or bite my ankles when I sit at a table. The A.D.C. is of course quite careless on this point, and is now afflicted with awful ulcers on his legs which come from the mosquito bites. . . .

The Colonial Secretary died to-day (Feb. 18). It gave me a nasty turn. It is seemingly a new type of fever called "blackwater"—unless it is yellow fever. But he has been ill with it for two months with frequent relapses. Before he sank into a comatose state—his face was the colour of a saddle—he talked to me in a faint voice about his wife and child at home. The Bishop of Bulombel came to see him before he died, but chiefly spent his time in wringing his hands and saying, "How *tărrible!*" . . . He is a quaint person, this bishop. He ought never to have come out here. "Why did he?" Vanity, I suppose. After all it is something to be a bishop, even if it is only a colonial one. He was a Vicar in South Kensington, I fancy did not get on very well with Mrs. Bishop who is an "Honourable" and very domineering. But he explained to me one of his disenchantments. It never occurred to him till he had been consecrated, that the title of his see did not go very well with his Christian name—Percy. "Percy Bulombel" or "P. Bulombel" looked so odd at the bottom of a document and provoked ribaldry. He almost wished to be plain Percy Granger as before. . . .

I'll tell you who *has* come out well in the appalling time we are going through (March 8). And that is the weak-on-the-chest English Curate who travelled with me on the *Bathurst*. I wrote him down as a missionary, but it seems he was coming as the Bishop's Chaplain or factotum. (By the bye, Percy Bulombel doesn't set great store by missionaries and is much ruffled if you class him as a "missionary" bishop. He regards them as the parish priests used to regard the friars. He explained to me that he was a *Colonial* bishop and his

chaplain was *not* a missionary, with some heat.) But this Chaplain—Smithies—has risen to the occasion, and the occasion has needed it. The Governor is at death's door with this awful pernicious fever—or yellow fever, or blackwater, or bilious remittent—*I* don't know. Two of our doctors are already dead, and three of the officers at the barracks, the Agent for the steamers is said to be dying. In the middle of the horrors Mr. S. is everywhere at once, doing assistant to the one remaining valid doctor, (male nurse if need be to the convalescent,) chaplain to those who are conscious but likely to die: he even offered to come and help me in clerical work. Fortunately, the epidemic has sobered our A.D.C., who works alongside of me like a good 'un and copies despatches, runs errands, and helps to nurse the Governor.

March 30. The worst of the epidemic seems to be over. The Governor has departed for "the Islands"—as we call Madeira and the Canaries—to convalesce, and "Percy Bulombel" seized the occasion to give himself leave of absence. He amused us all very much by issuing a printed farewell letter, saying that now he had regained his health (he hasn't been ill,) he feels it incumbent on him to make a short visit to England to consult with the clergy there as to the best methods of awakening spiritual life in our West African Settlements, and that whilst absent he will always pray for us from 32 Bessborough Gardens . . . or something to that effect.

The Chief Justice acts as Governor. I am glad because he is one of the few white men here with new ideas about—what is the word that is coming into fashion? Hygiene?—and alcohol. He doesn't get on well with J. B. by his silent protest against perpetual cocktails. The fact is, that drinking here is at least half the cause of the place being called the White Man's Grave. God knows the climate's pretty bad—only two short dry seasons when the heat is so awful that you long for the rains; and then when the rain *does* fall, it falls in cloud-bursts, in cubic miles of water that drown you—I am not joking—if you are out in them. And the lightning strikes and slays in all directions or the tornado blows the roof off your house. When the sun shines again on the rain-soaked ground, the atmosphere for days and weeks together is like a Turkish bath. Thermometer at night seldom goes below 82°—you get so exhausted and listless that you simply *must* have a stimulant. Then to new-comers is offered the delicious insinuating cocktail, made according to West Indian receipts of gin and brandy and curaçoa, with lemon,

soda water, angostura bitters and a flavour of fruit. You drink it down (sometimes with a little ice off the steamers), and . . . Oh! my word! *what* a change five minutes afterwards! You are so jolly, you can hardly feel the ground as you walk, you seem to glide as in dreams; you laugh at the sorriest jest, you feel yourself the wittiest of men, and West Africa—especially if the moon is shining and a few stars are out and the scent of the frangipanis is strong—seems not half a bad country after all, and the Susu women—if you go to see a native dance—are really very tempting.

But unfortunately the pleasant effects don't last for more than an hour or so. Then comes the rebound; you are chilly and your mouth seems slack, your face haggard. "Another cocktail?" "All right, I don't mind." And so in time you get a West African liver. And this is nothing to the lengths to which most of the Europeans go, official or non-official. There are only about ten out of forty here who are not more or less drunk every night. In the daytime they consume porter and bottled beer, fiery sherry and "tots" of rum or whisky, besides the uncounted cocktails. The wonder is *not* that they *die* but that they *live*. Yet the Governor, who once was a doctor, sees no great harm in this; he looks upon it as inevitable. Most of the men out here drink from sheer funk, to keep away the dread of fever, which comes like a thief in the night.

Hitherto I have escaped anything beyond a very slight attack. I restrict myself to a single cocktail once a week on Sundays, though I am looked upon as an awful prig by the other whites, and for everyday drink I only take the excellent Bordeaux wine that the French merchants sell. And I drink heaps of tea and manage to get goat's milk to put in it . . . and without being unbearably self-righteous I think I may say that my life is less *désordonné* than that of my companions. If I could only get away to the interior! The missionaries now have most of their stations up country beyond the "Colony." They say the nights are beautifully cool, it is ever so much healthier, and they get lots of cow's milk. Unfortunately we are on very bad terms with the natives. They associate us only with punitive expeditions; so any "Govamana man"[1] (as they call officials) is sure to be stopped if he tries to get any distance inland. . . . I am striving, however, to make the best of my surroundings. Now that the Governor is gone we're ever so much happier. The

[1] Government man.

Chief Justice—who has come to live at Government House —and I have become a couple of charwomen. We have thoroughly turned out this dirty, unwholesome old barrack, waged war on the cockroaches and rats, the hairy spiders and scorpions, the fleas and mosquitoes. We've sacked the frowsy drunken old butler—at any rate till J. B.'s return—and installed Muhammadan servants who are beautifully clean, teetotallers, and quiet. We have also ventured on a daring project : a climb to the very highest point of the Lion Mountain—nearly 3,000 feet up. Oh, what a delicious air we drew into our lungs ! We are putting up a shanty there —enough to keep the rain out—and are going to climb up every Saturday and spend the Sunday in the cool, almost bracing air. . . . When the clouds come in off the sea, it is a wonderful Jack-in-the-Beanstalk country, a Laputa in the sky. Port Liberty and the low-lying land and broad estuary are hidden under the cloud veil, which looks like a sea of cotton-wool. Only far away to the north we see the sunlit hills of Mendi and to the south a blue sea and misty horizon. Around us are noble trees hung with priceless botanical treasures in the way of orchids, ferns, arums, lycopodiums. It is amazing that the British have been here eighty years and built no Hill Station on these noble mountains, mountains that were the Theon Ochema of the Carthaginian Hanno, the one part of weird West Africa that entered into the history of the classical world.

EUSTACE MORVEN.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIETY AND THE SECOND ADVENT

From Professor Lacrevy, F.R.S., to Eustace Morven.

Regent's Park,
June (I won't date it further) 1878.

MY DEAR MORVEN,—

And why can't it be in return "My dear Lacrevy"? Why drag in the Professor in every one of your interesting letters? We have ceased to be master and disciple and I am only six or seven years your senior. . . . Of course I am keeping your letters safe. If anything should happen to me before you return from Africa, my sister Adela will know where they are. . . . I was just thinking, thus far in my letter, of our name "Lacrevy": we are, as you know, of Huguenot descent, and the name is probably a rude, English, eighteenth century corruption of "La Crevée." I dare say far back in the sixteenth or seventeenth century there was some wretched camp follower in the Huguenots' wars who happened to have a son from one of her numberless amours. She no doubt was nicknamed "La Crevée" by the soldiers, and the nickname became her son's surname. It did not require many generations to make his descendants sufficiently respectable to have produced a great gout doctor and his poor biologist son—myself. But the name comes home to me now; for it is *I*, indeed, who am *Le* Crevé. I fear me I am done for, and just as life was reaching a culmination of interest (I was elected an F.R.S. only a few months ago). The sense of tragedy still hangs over me, though I am supposed to be quite well now.

It happened thus: I was finishing a dissection of a Hoatzin and was leaning over the spirit tank when its fumes or something made me cough violently and next I was spouting blood like a wounded whale! Perch came in—you remember my Hospital dresser?—and said, "Whatever *'ave* you done, Professor? Cut yourself?" I was too faint to explain, but the good fellow took me home with the tenderest care and I managed to impress on him to tell no one. My father of

course attends to me. My mother knows nothing as yet. . . . But I face the worst. I'm a goner. Phthisis is in my mother's family, and indeed I had a very dear little sister who died of it. Well now, that is the situation . . . tragic I call it. I've everything a man could wish for except a wife. We are quite well off and I get in any case a good income from my work. I've just joined the new Arts Club, because I think painters are among the best of men, I've an annual subscription and a stall at the Opera, and I've a work on hand which —if it is ever finished—Darwin himself may deign to notice. (You know what it is: my huge Classification of Birds, a book I meant to take twenty years over. Now in a poor sort of way I must try to do it in two years, for I think with care I *may* live just as long as that.)

I was only in bed a week—my mother was told it was laryngitis—and here I am at work once more in the rooms you know so well: the cosy inner study and the big dissecting room, and beyond that the dead-house in which lie the birds, monkeys, lizards, snakes, and small mammals, that are our materials. . . . It is a perfect summer's day and the Gardens outside are filled with happy crowds. Through my study window I can smell the new mown hay in a park paddock and see gallant men and pretty girls on horseback riding round the Inner Circle. . . . It is a Patti night, to-night, at Covent Garden, and Adela is bringing one of her Slade School friends to an early dinner in the belief that "she might do" for me. She is a curious girl, a Miss Gay-Dombey —only a double-barrelled name, not a Chorus dancer. She is full of "Art," but does not in the least attract me. Besides now she might be Venus and Minerva combined and I should not think of proposing—to make her a widow in eighteen months, or leave tuberculous offspring.

Heigh ho! I see, I smell, I hear all this vivid world; I am just beginning to penetrate Nature's secrets; and the cup as I had commenced to drink deep is gently taken from my lips. I have eighteen months or two years more—at most, provided I take great care of myself. Father thinks that Madeira or the Riviera might do wonders. But I know better. And I cannot leave my work. I MUST finish my book.

Don't let this worry you. *You* are in far greater danger of dying before I do, unless you can get transferred to a less unhealthy post; and who can tell? Pasteur may discover the Tubercle bacillus and its cure before my two years are

up. . . . Many thanks indeed for the splendid specimen of *Hyomoschus* you obtained for me and sent home in a barrel of rum. It has quite cheered me up. The dear thing *has* a gall bladder. After what that ass Meyerhof wrote I was upset about my classification of the Ruminants.

By the bye, I have a pupil: a clever, studious, shy young fellow called Tudell. He is the son of a rumbustious loud-voiced prosperous Railway Manager, who has recently been appointed to manage this newly projected Direct Bristol Line. His father is an F.Z.S. (so as to come in to the Gardens on Sundays and perhaps to propitiate S.). He wants to crown his new Railway (which is making the Great Western furious) by a wonderful Regent's Park terminus on the site of those Enclosures at the top of Portland Place. But I tell him Portland Place will be far too strong for him. It would be much easier to do as *you* want, annex the entire basin of the Niger, than to take away one acre from the ornamental Gardens cribbed anciently from the Regent's Park by the Cubitts or whoever it was who built these stucco Terraces, Circles, and private palaces.

However, he is not easily daunted . . . a sort of man that Carlyle could write about, if the Sage of Chelsea has any writing energy left. Some say that James Tudell's father was an engine-driver on the North Western and that *he* began his career in the booking office or goods department of that line. But if he did, all the more credit to him. At any rate he shot up quickly and became the manager of a derelict Irish line that he made quite prosperous—and so on, and so on. His wife is—well, she might have been a prim school-mistress. She is devoted to Canon Vulliamy of St. Margaret's and dislikes discussing any subject that borders ever so slightly on "indelicacy." Those are the chief traits that impressed me when I went to lunch with them at Cardinal's Court, Westminster . . . one of those new buildings of flats behind Victoria Street which look out over the site of Cardinal Manning's projected cathedral. It was a Sunday, and Mrs. Tudell expatiated on "another of the dear Canon's *delightful* sermons." He had taken as his text "Whithersoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together" (I hope I quote it aright,) and had explained that of course in this case *eagle* meant *vulture;* and had forthwith "given us *such* a wonderful picture of the Vulture's life, in order, of course, to enforce his allegory at the end. Young James Tudell here interposed that the sermon was all rot; that

vultures had most unpleasant habits which—from much study at the Zoo—he proceeded to illustrate. His mother however closured the conversation as not being nice or appropriate either to the day or the luncheon table. Nearly all the hares we started at this meal seemed to lead us through miry ways into the haunts of the improper or the indelicate, and Mrs. T. always appeared in time to turn us off the scent.

Her husband took little part in the talk, other than to look from one speaker to another with twinkling eyes and to agree with his wife that there were many subjects not suited to general conversation. After she had at length risen and withdrawn her two pig-tailed plump daughters and small-boy-sons, her husband over his cigar and port told me some uncommonly racy stories. . . . They are vulgar-minded people except the *rara avis* eldest boy, who is a shy, studious, clever fellow and a reversion to types different from his papa and mamma. But his father, though coarse-fibred, has ENERGY, driving power, and will certainly prosper. He has good looks of a rather bullish style, a handsome man of the people, a well-shaved, well-dressed navvy with a navvy's hands—except that they had clean finger-nails.

It is funny, however, how one can spot relationships in traits and gestures—the way his eyes laughed after he had told me an improper story and his rather Arthur Roberts' gestures in illustrating it made me say within myself : *Bella ! Bella Delorme !* That extremely full-blooded lady of opulent charms has recently been delighting our jeunesse dorée by her acting as Fatima in Bluebeard. Something—I am not famed for tact, especially when I am nearly bored—made me say, " You would make a splendid actor, Mr. Tudell. Do you know just now the way you told that story reminded me awfully of Bella Delorme in Bluebeard : have you seen her ? " He turned red and said rather shortly, " No." Then when we adjourned to his study by ourselves to talk over his son's work at the Zoo before he goes to Cambridge, he told me that Bella Delorme was his sister, but that she was regarded as a disgrace to the family and they wished their children to grow up without knowing they had such a notorious aunt. He only told *me*, because it was not unlikely I might hear of the relationship at the Club or wherever else I discussed him, and perhaps I would be so good as to keep silent on the subject when his son worked with me. Of course I said " Certainly," but added I could not see anything derogatory in a stage career, especially if you had such a lovely person and telling

voice as Miss Bella. "It ain't only that," he said, "it's the number of times she's bin married. Why, I hardly know what her right name is at this moment. She broke my poor mother's heart with her goings on. She began her singing and dancing at the Halls; it's bin a trifle better since she got on to the reg'lar stage. As to my old woman here, she won't hear her name spoken in this house. So a word to the wise, eh? . . ."

If it wasn't for young James, who I think is a budding genius in biology, I should prefer to drop my acquaintance with the Tudells—and yet why? As Jowett would say, "After all, they are God's creatures. . . ."

But before I was ill the other day I had an experience of a different kind in *real* Society. I had never before been to anything like a Ministerial party. I had, however, made the acquaintance through S. of Lord Feenix, who is interested in lizards—perhaps because he rather looks like one. He married, by the bye, a daughter of the people you used to talk about—the Gay-Dombeys. Adela—as I think I wrote in this very letter—knows another daughter of this opulent house. Feenix has recently been made Under Secretary for India in Dizzy's reconstructed ministry; and, as the Secretary of State for that Brummagem Empire is rather a needy younger son and a bachelor, Feenix does the entertaining for him. The party was given in the fine rooms of the India Office—I say, by the bye, they've got a rare lot of interesting pictures stowed away there—put into dark holes and corners as if they were ashamed of them. I said as much to a permanent official of sorts in Windsor uniform, but his only reply was "Yaas? 'Think so?" and added they were considered by the department to be crude.

Lady Feenix received us at the head of a great staircase. My boy, she's a stunner! Beautiful violet eyes and hair that the French call doré-cendré—brown gold but with a greyish lustre. And *such* a figure, looking superb in one of these new "Princesse" gowns that are coming into fashion in place of the tight swaddling of the lower limbs. She seemed almost regal, in a magnificent diamond tiara; and yet she is the daughter of a man who was once a supercargo, and who as far as I can learn, was born in Peckham; and of a good charitable lady whose father was a pompous city merchant trading with the West Indies. Nature is a rum 'un. You yourself, if you will pardon my becoming personal, don't look the sort of person who should have been born in the north of London (wasn't it?) and of parents who were

eminently and respectably of the middle class. However, the romantic look about *you* evidently comes from your father's Welsh origin. There is more than a dash of the dark Silurian race.

But that party! I must go back to it. It was history as well as pageant. Dizzy came to it. It was not long after his Cyprus *coup*, and he was simply mobbed. The Prince and Princess of Wales were there. She, too, is a beauty, and no mistake. I am no respecter of traditions and hate the humbug in our contemporary press which conceals the fact that Queen Victoria is a dumpy little woman, (my father won't hear of this and says she has a magnificent presence and overawes him even when she is in bed—but then he is a Court Physician and goes to Drawing Rooms,) and which declares all princesses are lovely women. But Alexandra *is* by a rare chance. And she has such kind eyes. *And* a sense of humour! Elderly Sir Barnet Skettles (an envoy or a Minister somewhere but an arrant snob) was hurrying upstairs to get recognized (the Princess was standing by Lady Feenix), stepped on a lady's train and fell sprawling. The princess tried not to laugh, but by some accident her eye met mine (I had shamelessly edged myself into the front row of the *haie* we were told to form). And she twinkled just as though we were two fellow human beings both with a sense of the ludicrous and exchanging confidences. It was silly, but that friendly merry glance set me up all the evening. You see, I had not then broken a blood vessel (though I dare say this party and much other contemporary junketing was a contributory cause) and believed myself to have a Future—I saw myself in a court dress presenting a Copy of my Classification of Birds to H.R.H., and her saying, " Weren't you the gentleman at the India Office party who met my eye when dear Sir Barnet Skettles fell over his sword and pulled Lady Brocklebank down with him? . . ." and my discreetly admitting the fact.

But that party! I don't suppose I shall go to another before I die. This time next year I shall be quite the invalid, coughing my lungs away and writing incessantly at my book on birds. Yet I shall like to look back on this glimpse of the Great World. The uniforms, the orders, the women's dresses and jewellery, the celebrated persons whose faces one recognized from *Punch* pictures and *Graphic* portraits (only they always looked either very much younger or very much older, much better looking and much more normal,

and yet in a way like tired actors). And the music of two bands playing Sullivan's delightful tunes from *Trial by Jury*, the *Sorcerer*, and the new success—*H.M.S. Pinafore ;* and Offenbach's *Grand Duchess* which has just been revived in London with Bella Delorme in the title part—to the great mortification no doubt of Mrs. Tudell. And the refreshments —a stand-up supper, but *such* a supper, *such* good things, *such* wines. And most of the people so jolly easy to talk to and friendly inclined. At least I found them so. But then they are keen on the Zoo and want me to let them in on a Sunday morning.

Now I suppose I ought really to wind up this letter. I have scribbled it in snatches and been quite a week over it. It was begun under a sense of tragedy ; but who knows. Perhaps by some fluke I may get over this—and live ? Oh, if I *only* could ? I wouldn't mind being bed-ridden so long as I could take in newspapers and watch the pageant of life from Harley Street. Neither you nor I nor any other honest *thinking* person knows what happens to us when life leaves the body. It seems monstrously unfair and wasteful that our built-up experience ends there. But we know nothing. We are up against an absolute blank wall.

Well. Here's to you . . . in cod liver oil ! In another month or so, unless I am too seedy, I will write another budget of babble. By the bye, look out for my paper on the porcupines in the next P.Z.S., and if you *can* get me a specimen of an adult male *Atherura*, please do so. Any expense you incur I must and shall repay ; and look here, old chap, dear old pupil, if you are hard up at any time don't hesitate to draw on me. I make lots of money, and my father *will* be generous, and *he* makes lots of money. I have no need to save—especially as I mayn't be here in two years' time. Your mother can't be over well off, and your screw is nothing much. At any rate if I catch you impoverishing yourself to get me specimens, I'll—I'll send 'em back to you undissected and carriage unpaid ! . . .

A. H. Lacrevy.

From Mrs. Morven,
Porchester House, Islington.

June 18, 1878.

My darling Boy,—

Relieved, indeed, was I to learn of the decline of the terrible epidemic which has raged in your Colony, and your having

come through it safe and sound—spared, I doubt not, to do the Lord's work in many ways—though all seems to point *more conclusively than ever* to the shortness of time that remains to us before the Second Advent. Indeed, I cannot say I sympathize over-much with the efforts of your missionary friends. The poor Negroes doubtless have their place in God's creation, but one feels there is no time for their conversion, when *we ourselves* are not ready as a nation to meet the Lord. And if *we* are not ready in this much blest land which has seen an outpouring of the Holy Spirit beyond any other, *what* can be said for *poor infidel France* and all those parts of Europe still sunk in the errors of Rome ? The newspapers I send you (*Standard* and *Spectator*—I hope you get them ?) will have told you of the amazing events of the time. We are *indeed* on the *eve of vast changes*. The Seven Seals are being broken one by one, and each startling event is followed by another. Lord Beaconsfield (as he is now known) has called the Indian troops to Malta (see Ezekiel xxxviii.) and sent the British Fleet to Besika Bay. The Czar, many of us think, is the real Antichrist—or might it not be Count Skobeleff ? Though from an extraordinary utterance we heard at the Central Church last Sunday, it looks rather as if *Prince Bismarck* is qualifying for that awful rôle. *He has come to terms with Rome !* Can *any one* who reads the papers be blind to the signs of the times and the *imminent* Second Coming ? Take Dizzy, as your father used to call him. *What* a portent ! Jew of the Jews, and yet *a member of the Church of England*, (and you know we Adventists have *never* " spewed out " the National Church—we recognize her in the sublime but sad figures of the Two Witnesses, destined to enter God's Kingdom after all, through the gate of Martyrdom). Dizzy —Lord Beaconsfield—is Prime Minister of England. He proceeds—the papers say—shortly to a Congress at Berlin, to create, I doubt not, the Ten Kingdoms spoken of in the Apocalypse. . . .

And now to turn for a moment to the trivial affairs of this passing World. I remembered my promise to see something of the Gays—or rather the Gay-Dombeys, as they foolishly call themselves in the present fashion of having two surnames instead of one. It is curious that your interest in them should revive, since you saw so little of them in your boyhood. I think you knew *why* we held aloof from them, though your poor father was a partner in the firm when it wasn't the great concern it is now. Indeed they owed *everything* to him. When

Mr. Dombey went bankrupt your father, who wound up his affairs, still kept the name up on a brass plate in a side street off Leadenhall Street. And as soon as he could foregather with Walter Gay, a Mr. Gills and a Mr. Chick, and several other friends or relations of the fallen man, he set the business going again in a modest way. Some day I will tell you more about this and give you your father's papers.

But as long as poor Mr. Dombey lived I could *never* go near them. There was *a terrible scandal* between your Uncle James and the second Mrs. Dombey—too painful even now to write of fully.

Florence Gay-Dombey, however, never would hear *anything* said against her step-mother. Although she had hardly the spirit of a mouse (she might have been attracted to the Truth of our Church, only her husband opposed it—your father held a *high* opinion of Mr. Gay, but to my mind he was *too much of the sailor*), she always spoke up for this unhappy woman. After Lord Feenix died (the present peer is his nephew), Mrs. Dombey continued to live abroad, and—alas ! —*entered the Church of Rome.* In her latter years she returned to England and lived close to the Gays—or the Gay-Dombeys. She did not die till last year. They tell me she bore *an extraordinary resemblance* to the ex-Empress of the French. So long as she was there, much in and out of the house in Clapham Park, I felt there was an additional reason for my keeping away from them, lest my meeting her should arouse *painful memories* of the past. I only broke this resolve when you asked me to invoke Mr. Gay's influence to get you an appointment. However, now that the poor thing is in her grave awaiting God's judgment in that awful day—and may she find mercy !—I thought I might renew our acquaintance, especially as you wished it.

So in spite of my increasing rheumatism and having first ascertained my coming would be convenient, I made the journey. *Quite* an expedition, you can imagine ! I left Islington by omnibus for Kennington Park ; there I took another omnibus to Clapham Common, and *there* I always feel *quite* lost ! No public vehicle went out into the country as far as Clapham Park. So I had to bargain with what you would call a " growler " to drive me to the " Chestnuts." *Such* a pretty place it seemed to me. You might imagine yourself *miles* from London. But Florence Gay says they will have to move right into London. Her children are all grown up and find it " slow " (I fear *they* are " fast "). Her husband

now dislikes riding backwards and forwards to the City because of the tram cars and tram lines. The daughter who was named Lucretia after Miss Tox (a member of our Church), wants to live in South Kensington so that she may study Art more conveniently. I thought her an affected creature. She speaks of her friends as "soulful," and is mad about "colour," and "form," and Greek Statuary, which she does not consider *in the least* indecent.

Interest in the Second Coming of the Lord, *there was none.* Not even in the older daughter Fanny (after her grandmother, Florence's *real* mother, though from the way she goes on about her "Mama," the erring Edith Dombey, you might have thought she had forgotten her father's first wife ever existed). What was I saying? Oh yes—the elder daughter Fanny or Frances actually professes an interest in religion and yet turned a deaf ear when I tried to tell her of the approaching end of the World! She was always a sort of "spiritual god-daughter" of Florence's step-mother, though the latter would not—could not, being an R.C.—hold her at the font and give her own name of Edith. Some time ago, Fanny Gay in imitation of her "god-mother" wanted to become a Roman herself, and even go into the Convent of the Sacred Heart, which—alas!—our government allows to be set up in Tooting. Florence tells me that *neither she nor the girl's father* put the *least* obstacle in the way; but she changed her mind after Mrs. Dombey died and left her a legacy. And now she is *very high Church* and plays the organ at St. Barnabas, Tooting Bec—where the goings-on with candles and side-chapels and Reservations of the Blessed Sacrament are quite one of *the* scandals of the day, and yet *a parody* on what *we* do under the directions of our latter-day Apostolate. Oh, *why* are they so blind! *So* near and yet *so* far, as some poet says.

Florence Gay had *quite* a large family. First there was Paul, whom you have met once or twice and who is *the* important member of the firm. Then came a daughter, Florence, who died when she was only ten and whose death completely broke up old Mr. Dombey who died from the effects of his anguish; then followed a second son, Solomon (or *S. Edward Dombey,* as he now tries to write his name, being *a little ashamed* of the Solomon, and thinking "Gay" too flighty. . . . He was at lunch and told me this). S. Edward Dombey is a clergyman, rather a *worldly one,* I thought, and is rector of St. Bridget's in the City. But he seems to be able to live in Clapham in a fine house and only go to his church on Sundays.

He married a Miss Totes, a daughter of a maid-companion of his mother who had contracted a wealthy marriage. Next to the Rector son comes Frances or Fanny, whom I have already described ; then Suzanne—as she is *affectedly* styled by those to whom the honest Bible name of Susan—meaning "Lily," is *repellent.* Suzanne G. D. (who was named after this great friend of Florence's youth, Mrs. Totes—they pronounce the name Toots) made the *grand marriage* of the family. She married Lord Feenix, who is now, I think, something in the Government. You may remember I was asked to the wedding in 1873 ; but the Lord's Coming seemed so imminent just then that I went nowhere. I have never seen Lady Feenix, but I hear she is *very beautiful.* Lucretia, the youngest daughter, I have already mentioned. And lastly comes Perceval, the youngest of the family. He was at luncheon the day I went ; home from Oxford for a few days. I thought him conceited to the verge of impertinence. I believe he writes an affected kind of poetry. His mother wanted to read me some of it, but I begged her to desist, the opening verses sounded quite *heathenish* and *immodest.*

There were four out of Florence's seven children at lunch and the daughter-in-law, Mrs. S. E. Dombey—*a very arrogant* person setting every one to rights. Mr. Gay-Dombey and Paul remained in the city, and Paul of course had his own home. (He married a far-off American cousin years ago.) I only saw Walter Gay-Dombey just as I was leaving. He looks hale but begins to show his age. He is *very* kind and jolly, but *quite* impervious to true religion. The eighth person at lunch was Mr. Bennet Molyneux, a cousin of Lord Feenix's, and something in the Foreign Office. He had driven down all the way from London in a hansom cab, and had told the man to put up at a livery stables and drive him back. *What* it must have cost ! But some people *never seem to care what they spend.* I talked to him about you, but his constant staring at me through an eye-glass perturbed me. He said very little in reply, except when I complained of the postage (4*d.* an ounce) on my letters, and how I nevertheless wrote you *at great length.* It *did* seem to me that the Government might make the postage to its colonies cheaper. But he was most discouraging and said one could write all that was necessary to tell another person on half a sheet of paper.

How worldly the talk was at that table ! All about theatres and concerts, dances and dinners and wicked infidel books. Except perhaps for Florence, who after all has *a heart of gold*

and is *a perfect fount of kindness*, I could not imagine one of them being numbered with the Hundred and forty-four thousand of the elect "who will know not death." One does not like to jest about such solemn subjects, but I could not help wondering *what* Mr. Bennet Molyneux of the Foreign Office would look like at the Second Coming. I try to fight against spiritual pride, but his manner to me was *so quietly insolent* that I could not help hoping our eyes might meet in the great day of the Lord, when I was being caught up with the Blessed and he was glued to the soil. But the whole question of God's dispensation is too awful even to be discussed with all reverence in a private letter. . . .

After lunch and coffee, I walked through the beautiful grounds with dear Florence. Their gardener has *great taste* and the flower beds were magnificent with scarlet geraniums, blue lobelia and yellow calceolaria, and splendid standard roses, alternately pink and crimson. Florence agreed with me that she and Walter had consistently spoilt their children. "You see," she said, "I was not very happy in my own girlhood, and I determined when I was married that our children should never feel snubbed or thwarted. And the dear things have turned out *so* well. Of course it is rather a grief to us that dear Paul has no children as yet—we *so* wanted to feel sure of the succession. But Diana is *quite* a young woman still, they have only been married four years, and of course Suzanne has already made me a grandmother twice over, besides Sol's frail little daughter." Of course I said to her—I couldn't *help* saying—her distress about the succession was *vain*. It was simply impossible that earthly affairs could last much longer, at any rate on the level of ships and shipping firms being of any importance. I reminded her of the words "*And there shall be no more sea.*" And if there is to be no more sea in the next dispensation when Christ's blessed reign with his saints begins, where would Dombey and Son be, with their fleet of steamers? She only said "I know" and seemed to wish to avoid argument. But I felt I *must* be resolute. Something stirred within me and I remembered in the most remarkable way the Apostle Robinson's latest Encyclical on the coming end of the World —the end at any rate of the world *we* know. But Florence seemed uncomfortable. She said the Vicar of St. Barnabas took a different view—the Vicar of St. Barnabas contrasted with the Apostle Robinson!—that *he* thought the Second Coming would be *spiritual* not *material*, that only a chosen

few would know that the Second Coming *had* taken place—it would gradually *dawn* on us, there would be no *violent* upsetting of things as they were. And that Walter was of *quite* that opinion. *He* believed that this was much too jolly a world for God to destroy with fire, and that we were quite as likely to enter on the Millennium by some arrangement between the Powers. I had to stop the discussion because unconsciously the poor darling was becoming quite blasphemous, even though she was only repeating her husband's foolish and flippant theories.

But, as I say, she has a heart of gold. She cried a little over past memories as the time drew near for me (after a most *delightful* tea under the Cedar) to take my leave. She would not *hear* of my walking to Clapham Common for the omnibus, but sent me all the way to the Elephant and Castle in their comfortable brougham. I really must close this letter now, though, my sweet boy, I *enjoy* writing it, as I seem to be talking to you. But I have asked Eliza to weigh what I have already written (you don't like me to cross the writing so I use *such* a lot of sheets even of "foreign note"). She finds it comes with the envelope to six ounces, which at fourpence an ounce will be two shillings. *Of course* it is not the money I grudge to the best of sons. I know you will laugh at me, but it is the disapproval of the young woman at the Islington Post Office! I really *can't* go there now with my letters to you, I send Eliza to get them weighed and posted. You know they have just taken to using young women in our post offices. I cannot say the idea appeals to me as I do not consider women are *fitted* for such work. Not that *these* young women are too timid. We thought *that* would be the trouble in the beginning. *Not at all.* They are so undismayed that they are *quite rude and offhand.* And this particular one does not believe that Bulombel *is* a Colony, and if it is she thinks one ought not to send letters there that weigh over two ounces. I think next time I shall try to post my "budget" at the General Post Office. They may be too busy to comment on it there. Though Eliza doesn't mind the comments; I fear she rather enjoys what she calls a "good set-to."

And now, my son, May God have you in his holy keeping and may you be numbered with the Elect.

Your devoted mother,

HARRIET MORVEN.

CHAPTER V

PAUL DOMBEY III

A FEW sentences in Mrs. Morven's letter to her son given in the last chapter throw some light on how the famous house of Dombey and Son was refounded after its downfall and eclipse.

The main business of the old House had lain with the West Indies and the Southern States of North America. Under Gay, Brazil and the Argentine were brought into the scope of operations. His genial manners, the romance attaching to his shipwreck on the *Son and Heir*, his runaway marriage with Dombey's daughter and the reconciliation which had followed : all contributed to raise friends for him in the City, where romance is by no means out of place or incapable of influencing men of wealth. Gay's own experiences at sea had taught him to loathe the Sailing Ship with its uncertainties, delays, and dependence on the caprice of the weather. He was all for steam, and steamers came later in the transport service of Tropical America than elsewhere. His first venture, a second-hand, iron screw-steamer of 700 tons burden, purchased from a mismanaged, bankrupt Liverpool company, was refitted for passenger accommodation and renamed the *Florence*.

It plied with such success between the West India Islands and New Orleans that in two years, on borrowed capital, two larger passenger boats were added to the fleet of " Dombey and Son," and carried on a direct service between New Orleans and Southampton, then later with Bristol. A certain amount of discreet blockade running was done during the American Civil War. The firm also took an interest in the building of the Panamá Railway, and in connection with this put steamers on the Pacific coast and carried many emigrant passengers and much cargo northwards to the new settlements of British Columbia and Vancouver's Island. It made much money over the different Mexican Expeditions of the 'sixties, its steamers being frequently chartered by the French Government. Yet with impartiality it ran cargoes of ammunition

from New Orleans to scarce-known Mexican ports to supply the revolutionary armies of Juarez.

During the 'sixties, when the first-class passenger service was given much more attention, Walter Gay (long before this, in 1854, at the express desire of his father-in-law he had added Dombey to his surname) adopted the plan of naming all his ships after flowers, as a compliment to his wife—Florence—whom he unwaveringly adored. This was why one came to hear of the R.M.S. *Flower-de-luce*, the R.M.S. *Cornflower*, the S.S. *Mayflower*, *Orange-blossom*, *Gillyflower*, and *Elder-flower*. The *Hyacinth* was one of their most successful steamers; and the *Tuberose* was obviously dated 1880, when æstheticism was beginning to tell on the upper middle class and Perceval Dombey published his first slim volume of verse entitled, "Tuberose and Candy-tuft."

Paul Gay-Dombey, the eldest son, was born at sea in 1844, when his father, the supercargo of a big sailing ship, had his wife Florence travelling with him. Astrologers would have told him he was born under the influences of Jupiter and Apollo, if such a conjunction be possible. Nature shaped him to be a ruler of men, a lover of beautiful women, and a magician in the production of wealth from dross. Yet envious Saturn intruded on his horoscope here and there.

His father—Walter Gay-Dombey—was still in receipt of but a modest income when Paul was quite young, so that at first his schooling was not so "superior" as that of his younger brothers, who were educated rather with a view to future social position than the attainment of useful knowledge. From a preparatory school at Brixton he passed on to Brighton where he spent several happy years under the tuition of Mr. Jacob Feeder, B.A. (who had married Cornelia Blimber and taken over her father's well-known school). Mr. Feeder had more modern ideas of education than his father-in-law, Cornelia was a little softened by occasional episodes of motherhood; and Paul was far stronger in body than his little old-fashioned uncle whose decline in health dated from Early Victorian attempts at cramming. Paul Dombey the Third, by a sudden and novel impulse of his father, was next sent to a College at Brussels. Here he was thoroughly grounded in French and German, and here he became *un peu trop emancipé pour son age* (as one of his professors apologetically complained while on a visit to the indulgent father). Being recalled to nip a misplaced attachment in the bud, he entered his father's office, willingly, as a junior clerk; and learnt book-keeping

and tidy office ways, as he could never have mastered them at school ; yet at the same time, out of office hours, he studied foreign languages at a great London college, mastering specially Spanish and Portuguese to cope with the Firm's correspondence in Iberian America. Finally at the age of twenty-one, in response to his own wish, he embarked on the real education of his life : over-sea travel.

This of course was undertaken on the ships of the Dombey Line. He went out first on the trial trip of the *Elderflower*, which, the North now being definitely the winning side, was to open up a direct steamship intercourse between London and New Orleans. " Mr. Paul " did not serve as an apprentice, or purser's clerk, nor precisely as an agent of the Firm ; but he was something of all these in turn, and behind it all the Heir Apparent : eager to learn, not too proud to serve, hefty with his hands ; and—as Suzanne much later on, when she had learnt French, was wont to call him—*très charmeur*. Grizzled captains of the line taught him navigation and the use of the sextant ; he qualified at twenty-five for a master's certificate. Mates imparted to him all the secrets of ship-management and of mismanagement ; they revealed to him where the owners were done and the crew bamboozled ; how inconvenient regulations of the Board of Trade could be evaded, how foreign harbour masters might be diddled, the clever dodges of blockade-running and the landing of contraband cargo. In addition they confided to him their love troubles, their grievances against the " old man," their financial embarrassments, their clever notions and inventions which had been blighted at the London office. He picked out the good from the bad in all this. He was born honest and upright, yet never a prig. He had those frailties of *morale* which went with his handsome face and gallant bearing, but with it all a clean mind, a detestation of foul language, dirty surroundings and crooked ways. He never abused a confidence and seldom if ever rebuked an opinion ; but gradually, deftly, he warped his firm and their employés from the shady side of marine business, in which all steamship lines have at one time dabbled, into the straiter paths of bold yet legitimate operations, of which no man could stand ashamed. His feeling for the common sailor was noteworthy, though we might think it to-day no more than—barely as much as . . . was the seaman's due. Nevertheless in him Plimsoll was later to find a steady backer in his great crusade.

Paul Dombey to the end of his days looked back on those

nine years between 1865 and 1874 as the most superbly happy time in his life. He plied the shuttle backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, seldom being away from his parents as much as twelve months; ordinarily spending the summer with them every year. But he ascended the Amazon in a paddle-steamer and collected birds and butterflies with Bates the naturalist, at the same time marking down the commerce-openings among the Portuguese settlers and the half-caste adventurers; he stayed in three-hundred-year-old Colombian coast towns which retained memories of Drake and all the gorgeousness of their sumptuous seventeenth century life after the English pirates had ceased to raid; he explored the Magdalena River and opened up relations with Bogotá. The friendships he made in that mountain capital with his fluent Spanish, his irresistible good looks and courtesy of manner, enabled him to intervene profitably in the affairs of the Panamá Railway Company.

He lived for six months with a discreet Creole mistress in a sadly-beautiful, cheaply hired "Colonial" mansion near New Orleans, restored its lovely untidy garden to something like order, ate with enjoyment the delicious peppery stews concocted by French-speaking negress-cooks, picked up an abandoned cotton plantation and resettled on it as paid labourers the loafing ex-slaves of the dead-and-gone proprietors. Then installing the Creole lady as manageress he went off to see what could be done to establish a fruit trade between New Orleans (a great mart even then for supplying the Mississippi valley) and the coast ports of Yucatan, Honduras, and Nicaragua. He backed up the cause of the Mosquito Indians against the cruel Nicaraguan Government, and got from them concessions at Blewfields that afterwards became a very valuable property to his Firm. He spent months and months in Cuba—indescribably beautiful yet pestilential Cuba (as it was under the Spanish régime) in studying to advantage the Tobacco trade and Orange cultivation.

A succession of Spanish governors found him a delightful guest, and through him British capital was set to work building the first Cuban railways. The fact that his prolonged sojourns in Habaña, Pinar del Rio and the "parrot" city—brightly painted Santiago—were not in solitude, that house was kept for him by a beautiful Spanish dancer, temporarily abstracted from the Teatro Ysabel Segunda, was no disparagement of him in Cuban esteem, nor in those days was it likely to pass from isolated Cuba into the English press, nor even

the accompanying incident that he turned his schooldays' fencing to very good account in fighting a not very blood-thirsty duel with a Spanish officer who conceived he had prior claims to Doña Sol's regard.

The Cuban insurrections did not get much in the way; he was English and a privileged personality whom nobody—certainly not a bandit—could help liking. This life with its sobering English interludes at home found him at thirty a tall, strong, handsome man, with a reserved quiet manner, a slightly bronzed complexion, foreign ways in tobacco and politeness to women, an iron will, but a charming smile. He was the sort of person with whom young ladies of the suburbs fell hopelessly in love on the third occasion of their meeting, and yet recovered their self-esteem by the way in which he brought back their relations to the plane of fraternal friendliness—the sort of person whose eye was always met by a waiter in the busiest restaurant at home or abroad, who was run-about-for by railway guards, whether he intended to tip them or not, whom soldiers in a town instinctively saluted because he looked so like an officer, whom barmaids served civilly yet without familiarity, to whom poor women of the street or little children instinctively appealed when in different senses of the word they were lost and wanted a helping hand.

Officials or general officers or great sportsmen whom he had mixed with abroad insisted when they met him again in London on electing him to a famous club, reserved usually for the most distinguished of travellers; he was such a good shot, such a good story-teller when pressed to entertain, such a "spanking good chap all round," that he was, through autumn shooting visits, already getting into the circles of the great and the well-descended. And it was at this stage of his life that his parents pressed him most strongly to marry.

When he had been in New Orleans as a young man, he had remarked as a curious coincidence: that the "Northern" Governor of Louisiana bore the surname of Dombey; as also that at the State functions and balls to which he received invitations through the British Consul the young hostess was the Governor's grave, beautiful daughter, Diana; whose composed and quiet manner and rather stilted way of speaking—in a voice singularly low-pitched for an American "belle"—were all in marked contrast to the exuberance, shrill voices and rapid utterance of the Southern women folk. But owing to his own domestic entanglement and his interest in business

he saw little of the Governor socially; and although he several times intended to find out whether his surname implied a real family relationship, he did not follow the matter up before he left his ventures in cotton and derelict mansions to prosper under other management while he had a look at Cuba. But when he was thirty years old he decided to pay a visit to New York in connection with the expanding shipping interests of the Firm (in which by now he was not only a partner but the Manager).

On the way back in the summer of 1874, he found among his fellow passengers on the Cunard boat the Honble. Horace Dombey, Senator of the United States, and his daughter Diana.

He was not long in realizing that here was the former Governor who had been sent down from Washington to bring good order back into New Orleans and the historical State of which it was the luxurious, wanton, wealthy, unhealthy but attractive capital. Horace Dombey, cigar in mouth, with open, long frock-coat, tight plaid trousers, Gladstone collar and voluminous black tie and rich pearl pin—confronted him two-mornings-out on deck and said: "Seems to me, we're namesakes? Kinder think we've met before, and that you're the young English spark that set up old Delarey's plantation again near Noo Orleans?" Paul admitted he was. Then Senator Dombey went on: "And you was kinder shy in those days—oh yes, I guessed, but it wasn't my business, I wasn't yer Pa or Ma; and what you *did* do was to set the Cotton business going again; and they tell me you opened up the fruit trade with Central America; also you're the real live partner in one of old England's biggest shipping Companies. But all that's neither here nor there, for the moment; what should draw us together is the probability that we're related. Since I was Governor of Louisiana and began to think of visiting Europe and had a bit of leisure to read, it struck me that the 'Dombey and Son' of your firm and my family must have come from the same stock in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Shall we sit?"

Between them they unravelled the skein, either then or during the voyage, and with added confirmatory details some time after. About 1700 there had lived a Cornelius Dombey [1] in or near London who traded with Holland and with the British plantations in America. His son Peter had amongst

[1] The Dombey stock was really of Huguenot origin in the seventeenth century; and from it on the other side of the Channel came the French botanist Joseph Dombey, of Peruvian fame. H. H. J.

other children an eldest son Paul, who was Paul Gay-Dombey's great-grandfather ; and another son Horace, who was restless and adventurous and who settled in New England. This namesake of Horace Walpole's had got into some scrape at home, had enlisted and been sent out to the States as a soldier in General Burgoyne's army. After the Peace of 1783 he preferred to remain there and become a citizen of the infant republic. His good looks won the heart of a well-dowered Quaker maiden of Boston, and his marriage with her led to a very prosperous career. The prosperity of his firm—paper-makers at Worcester, timber merchants, and what not else —was greatly increased by his son Peter, who in turn was the father of Senator Horace Dombey of Springfield and Cambridge, Mass. So in fact, Diana Dombey, who now appeared on deck, was undoubtedly Paul's second cousin.

This startling news was not conveyed to her then and there ; indeed they had only just reached this bold surmise by the time she joined them ; and Paul was merely reintroduced to her as a young Englishman of surname like to their own who had come to their Government House parties at New Orleans six years before. Diana, though very beautiful, was serious-minded and hard to thaw. Nevertheless, for her she exhibited less frigidity of manner and more interest in Paul than her father ever remembered her to have shown previously in any young man ; and as the Senator, thoughtfully smoking his Havana, watchedthem—two superb physical types—pacing the deck together, she tall and Greek in her beauty, Paul taller and well-knit, falcon-eyed, yet like a restrained fire, he at once thought of future developments that might bring them together.

Diana was his only child. Her mother, a handsome Canadian whom he had loved as passionately as was possible in a New Englander and a Quaker, had died when Diana was sixteen. On his daughter he then concentrated all his affection and all his interests. She would inherit a large share of his wealth, the remainder going to found a Botanical Garden and Museum at Cambridge (Mass.). He wanted her to marry well in every sense ; that is to say, a husband who was physically a fine man, as well as sound in character. Already the Senator without knowing it was an Eugenist. In the autumn of his life, growing tired of politics, his thoughts had turned to England, the cradle of his race, and he was very well disposed to find a son-in-law there.

So the marriage between Paul and his far-off cousin, the

faultlessly beautiful Diana, came about within three months of their meeting on the steamer. The Senator felt a chivalrous devotion to Florence as did most men who encountered her early Victorian appeal, her wistful friendliness ; Walter Gay-Dombey was the type of Englishman he most admired ; the three between them were soon so emphatic for this reunion of their Dombey stock that they almost rushed Paul and Diana into marriage. Diana was by no means unwilling, though owing to her puritan upbringing she really on the eve of her wedding hardly knew what marriage meant. Paul felt he must get married and the sooner the better, and he could hardly hope to find a more suitable bride than Diana Dombey. He even believed himself in love with her. Her reserve, her maidenly coldness, the ice in her increased, did not chill his virile ardour.

So they were married in the autumn of 1874 with great pomp (to please the Senator) at St. George's Hanover Square. Lord and Lady Feenix and a Molyneux contingent were present, and the Lord Mayor attended and signed the register, because the firm of Dombey and Son was beginning to be looked on as one of the potencies in the City, and Paul had achieved already great things for expanding British commerce. It was a double wedding. His brother Solomon married simultaneously Cornelia Knipper-Totes and shortly afterwards through his father's City influence (or rather, the regard felt for his father in the City) was inducted into the Rectory of St. Bridget's, Thames Street. The Lord Mayor may be said to have brought the nomination with him as his wedding present.

Paul and his bride were to go to Paris, Switzerland, and Italy for their honeymoon. Senator Dombey meantime returned to America and a few years afterwards reappeared in England as United States Ambassador.

Paul was so much in love with love, so ardent a husband that he believed his wife would thaw under his embraces and finally fuse her transports with his. But it was not to be, and the long honeymoon was a slow process of disenchantment. He prolonged his travels in the vain hope of at last making her love him with reciprocal ardour ; and also because he dreaded his mother's questioning eyes that would believe no lying statements the lips might utter. Yet also, outside and alongside the lover and the amorist, was the man of business. Paul had seen nothing of Switzerland or Italy previously and his visits to France had been perfunctory, either connected with school-journeys, or *en route* to Spain whither his American

business had sometimes called him. There was much in reviving Paris, already dreaming of a great Exposition in a few years and a recovery of her prestige, that interested him ; Switzerland was beginning to think of electricity derived from water power ; Italy was raw with newness, but to those who could look beneath externals there were commencing to press upward through dead leaves and autumn rot the spears of her new lilies.

Alternately he wooed his beautiful prim Quakeress, whom the statues of the Vatican distressed despite of fig leaves, whom the life of Naples horrified, whom the posters of renaissant Paris revolted ; and ever and again pursued some research into economics, inventions bearing on sea-travel or transport, trains of thought suggested even by French lubricity or Swiss thrift. He climbed mountains with enthusiasm in so far as the lateness of the season permitted ; he read Ruskin with eagerness whilst he gazed at Venice from his gondola, trying at the same time to caress—without response—the shapely hand of his Greek goddess who had remained marble.

Diana had a strong sense of duty. Though the sequel to the marriage ceremony was by way of a revelation to her, she realized that it was the ordeal through which all wives had passed ; this sequel was to be endured with what patience she could summon up ; but the Puritan acid in her blood prevented her finding pleasure in it. She felt affectionately disposed towards her husband ; he was a fine figure of a man, and the Almighty had made men thus and presumably tolerated their animality much more than he would have done in women to whom most sexual functions must connote shame or self-reproach, discomfort or travail. She had no wish to undo her marriage : she could not have borne the stigma of becoming an old maid ; she was proud of her beauty, but annoyed at the ardour it evoked in the man at her side whom she would—as with all other men—have preferred to treat according to their age as sister or daughter.

She had her passions, but they were altruistic. Like Eustace Morven's mother she had a passionate hatred of sin. Herself, she was immaculately truthful, icily chaste, unquestioningly reverent of what she deemed " holy things," scrupulously honest, coldly generous, sternly lavish to unmerited misfortune. She felt deeply for the great causes ; showed real emotion when she discussed slavery and the slave-trade, believed already in " women's rights " and greatly admired John Stuart Mill and Mrs. Belloc.

And in Switzerland her chief desire was to probe at Geneva the nascent movements towards Peace Leagues and the Red Cross service. Cases of cruelty to animals upset her so terribly that their recurrence spoilt the Italian trip. Her husband got as near ill-temper as he was able when in driving through matchless scenery, past historical monuments of entrancing interest, she could only inveigh against the cruelty of their driver and reiterate her dismay at the sufferings of their horses with their raw places and their obvious lameness. In Venice she just knew enough Italian—which means that her education was then amazing for a Bostonian and beyond that of the average Englishwoman of the upper middle class—to realize faintly the obscenities scrawled on the walls of historic buildings by idle soldiers or vicious boys. And her holy indignation at such breaches of taste spoilt for her the stay in this world's wonder. Her French was nearly perfect, and like her well-modulated English only bore a slight trace of her American nationality. But unhappily this enabled her to realize at a glance the pornography of Casanova.

Her husband had bought two of his volumes at a bookstall because of their unsurpassed description of the Venice of Goldoni and Guardi. Their interlarded naughty stories interested him but little, he dwelt on them as little as healthy-minded folk dwell on the indecencies of Shakespeare. But Diana picking up the book to read and coming upon some story of a nun who was peculiarly unchaste, instantly flushed to the roots of her hair and dropped both volumes into a canal. At Naples an American friend had advised her to see the Farnese Hercules and the cooking utensils of Pompeii. Unfortunately, being as she often was in an abstracted mood, like a puzzled goddess off her pedestal, she swept past the faintly protesting concierge guarding the entrance to the exhibition of " oggetti osceni " and nearly expired with horror on its threshold. Yet she would not tell Paul the causes of her sudden attack of faintness because they were too dreadful to mention.

For the whole remainder of their stay in Naples she was compelled to remain in their hotel apartments, lest out of doors or in some public place or gallery she might receive another shock either at the cruelty to beasts, birds, or insects in which Naples was then ostentatious, or because of the indelicacy of the lightly-clothed lazzaroni. She wore her thickest veil on a visit to Capri because of the proximity of the divers—who, sooth to say, at that date wore nothing but their skins.

Then she suffered through her religious prejudices. It is difficult for us in the day-of-to-day to realize how the American Puritan of the middle nineteenth century felt towards Roman Catholicism, especially if on top of Puritan ancestry (more or less) they were Quakers. A tour through Catholic Europe was to them a long spiritual martyrdom. Diana found no rest for the sole of her foot in this flood of idolatry save—strange to say—in Rome itself. Here there existed a community of Quakeresses, of truly good women, tolerated—even kindly entreated—by Pius IX himself, long before the Red, White, and Green flag floated from the Quirinal. They made it their business to visit poor people suffering from loathsome diseases, and to care for sick animals. Diana found them out as if by instinct, and worshipped with a full heart in their hidden meeting room.

They gave her an introduction to the Deaconesses of Kaiserwerth who had trained Florence Nightingale ; and on the return journey her visit to them was the most happy episode : the *most* happy, because Diana's whole heart went out to meet Germany half way. It was November and the unapproachable beauty of the Rhine and Southern Germany at that time, with its mixture of red and gold autumn foliage, old castles, sixteenth-century burgherdom, grave churches free from southern fripperies, stolid and respectable hotels reassured her, calmed the agitation of her mind, shocked at the levity, thoughtless cruelty and threadbare morals of the Latin peoples.

They stayed over Christmas with Paul's parents at Clapham Park with tolerable success. Diana remained an enigma to her simple and affectionate mother-in-law, and became a bore to the jovial Walter ; she found no points of agreement with her husband's sisters. Mrs. S. E. Dombey, the wife of the young city Rector, tried to patronize and pity her alternately, but met with no encouragement. Diana was enough of a wife—and with all her odd ways fond of Paul—not to permit any one to criticize or call her husband in question. Mrs. Solomon Dombey had a few years before made vehement love to Paul on one of his summer visits to his people, and consequently hated him in her heart since in default of his far more attractive personality she had had—in her climbing instinct and determination to marry a Dombey—to inveigle into matrimony his younger brother. Solomon Dombey was a pompous ass, of that type that even at the Day of Judgment will not be converted to a sense of humour or to the proportionate value of things.

In the early part of 1875, the Paul Dombeys settled down in a house of their own in Portland Place. Between them they had a joint income of over seven thousand pounds a year, steadily increasing. So they were able to live in great comfort and entertain considerably. All the money which Diana could spare from her dress and contribution to the housekeeping, she spent on charities and on supporting causes—all of a rather aggressive goodness, a rather belligerent beneficence. Committees of singularly unattractive men and women met frequently in her big drawing-room. At her more intimate parties Sir William McTavish discoursed on the nature of the Soul, and Life after Death; and the Armenians and Bulgarians were much prayed for and inquired into. The Baroness Burdett Coutts took up the earnest young bride and so did that pious great lady the Countess of Towcester: not without an eye to the value of her subscriptions.

In the autumn of 1875, Diana gave birth to a dead child and realized with a bitterness of sorrow—for she was fond of children—that she might never again be a mother . . . So at least the stupid accoucheurs of the day informed her. She had refused chloroform in her sufferings because it appeared to her contrary to religious principles to soften the curse resting on women; and probably if she had not avoided the subject with a maddening prudery but had taken her husband's advice and gone with him to consult Schweigener at Wiesbaden, the obstacle to happy motherhood might have been removed. As it was, she remained childless; but for many years retained the statuesque beauty that excited artistic admiration; and in true-hearted but heavy-handed philanthropy she played a noteworthy part in the London of the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties.

For Paul, his childless marriage became and remained for some time a tragedy; one to be lived down and made the best of. His great solace was hard work and creation. Everything he touched turned, if not always to gold, at any rate to very serviceable silver and bronze. He gave much money to the Zoo, paying for a proper instalment of Professor Lacrevy's dissecting rooms and paraphernalia; and it was here that he first met Eustace Morven. He helped to finance English Opera and did much to promote the Gilbert and Sullivan humour and music combined. He gave advice and good suggestions as well as heavy subscriptions to the hospitals; but in politics he could never make up his mind—at this stage or any other. Because, though Imperialistic when

but few had conceived the British Empire of to-day, he was radical to an extreme in home policy; whilst exceptionally tender towards suffering, and generous in aiding all who wanted assistance or encouragement, he was—with an outward veil of good manners—a hater of religious forms and ceremonies.

CHAPTER VI

THE FEENIXES

"MY step-grandmother was Edith Dombey," said Countess Feenix one day to me at the Dower house near Tewkesbury, when I was staying there in 1915 collecting materials for this book. "You know whom I mean, Sir Harry, my grandfather's second wife—— You take milk and sugar, don't you? And, Carry dear, pass him the crumpets—— She was quite the talk of the 'forties for her beauty and her having married into the City and not getting on well with her husband. Dickens got hold of the story and made her *so* portentous and unreal. She was said to have run away with poor Eustace's uncle, an odious person with teeth. There was a lot of exaggeration and misrepresentation about the whole business which could never have happened had either of them—Edith and grandpapa—had the slightest gleam of humour. However, she certainly compromised herself and 'made history,' don't you know. But her cousin, the Lord Feenix of those distant days, John's cousin, stood by her and she went to live with him in Italy."

"Did Lady Gay-Dombey see anything of her after that?" I asked.

"Oh dear me, yes! Of course she had done nothing wrong . . . but *oh* the fuss they all made about it . . . *so* tragic everybody was. She and my mother took a 'final' farewell in Brook Street, I believe, somewhere about 1850, and Edith said they must never meet again—the Lord alone knows why! when they were so fond of one another and old Mr. Dombey was quite ready to forgive. . . .

"Well, of course, a few years afterwards mother had to write and tell her Mr. Dombey was dead, and all about the children that had come. . . . She wanted Edith to be a sort of godmother to my sister Frances. . . . Then Edith Dombey had to reply saying her cousin, Lord Feenix, was dead and how she herself was going to live in Rome . . . for I need hardly say that like most women of her time who had had matrimonial troubles and chosen to live abroad she had

become a Roman Catholic. Then later on, in the 'sixties, she had a false alarm and thought she was going to die, and mother and father travelled out all the way to Rome to see her. . . . Do have some more tea. . . . Are you sure you won't? Well then take a peach—I picked them off the wall myself and they are good. . . .

"After that Edith was persuaded to come back to England—she was quite well off then, old Lord Feenix had left her all he could and she had come in for some of the Skewton money—and as my people lived then in Clapham Park, Edith took Tooting Bec House not far away. She used to drive herself about in a pony-chaise looking—I always thought as a child—very like the Empress Eugénie. There was a Roman Catholic chapel at Merton, and Tooting was the absolute country *then*."

"And all this led to your marrying Lord Feenix?"

"Naturally. Edith Dombey never took much interest in my sister Fanny; Paul and I were the ones she liked best. . . . Carry darling, if you've done your tea, do you mind just going over to the garage and seeing if Simmonds realizes he has got to be at the station to meet the 5.30 and bring out Uncle Paul and Aunt Diana? . . . Yes, you'd have thought after her own experiences in matrimony Edith Dombey would never have been a matchmaker. But what is bred in the bone—don't you know? . . .

"I *think* she'd a sort of feeling that she was making some amends in trying to link up the families again. Another of her cousins had succeeded to the Feenix peerage—the one who had been in diplomacy—and his eldest son was my husband. It occurred to her we should get on well together. . . . Here is a photograph of John taken about that time, and here are some notes and old letters that will explain to you how and why I married him. . . . You'll have to bring him in to poor Eustace's story if you tell it with frankness. But don't be too hard on him. . . . I know you had your own reasons for disliking him. However he's dead now and for some little time before he died he was quite different . . . or I was quite different. You can't nurse a person through a painful illness without understanding them ever so much better and coming to make allowances for them. . . . Now the others will soon be here and we shall have lots more things to discuss . . . whatever you put on paper you'll let me see? No: I shan't interfere with the truth but I don't want any injustice done to any one. . . . Things look bad in Ireland,

don't they ? *What* a government ! Drift, drift, drift ! Oh ! Here is my son-in-law, Captain Rupert. I don't think you've met before ? Rupert is just back with us on a fortnight's leave. When this horrible war is over he wants to see something of Africa, so he's been longing to meet you. . . . This tea's rather drawn. You'd better ring, Rupert, and ask them to make you some fresh. Carry went out to give a message for me about the car, and as she hasn't come back I expect she's gone up to the babies. We've extemporized a day-nursery out of one of the bedrooms. Yes : it's a charming house, this, but I liked Deerhurst *ever* so much better. Of course Victor and Myra are there now."

* * * * *

Lord Feenix [1] as Suzanne first saw him on the lawn, under the great cedar at Tooting Bec House, was far from unprepossessing in his twenty-seventh year. He was tall and distinguished-looking, just a shade insolent, with his eyeglass ; without whiskers, as if he had by some foresight of the fashions to come realized how whiskers would be regarded by the next generation and become a potent dissolvent of respect in Strand-magazine-records of celebrities at different periods. So that his photograph in 1873 causes no shudder and no pity. He wore then a stiff ashy-flaxen moustache ; had narrow brown-grey eyes, and ashy-flaxen hair, cut very short and sleekly brushed. His clothes were as nearly exempt from ungainliness as was possible in a man of that droll period who was not a futurist. In short, at a later date he

[1] In order better to understand their place in this narrative the reader might perhaps glance at this business-like statement regarding the Feenix peerage and the Molyneux family. Early in the reign of Charles II a Molyneux—or Mullynukes as the name was always pronounced and long spelt in Ireland—went to the Sister Island on King's business and received in reward the estate of Fion Isca (corrupted to "Feenix") in County Wicklow. This person adroitly shaped his politics so that he was on the right side after the Battle of the Boyne, and Queen Anne conferred on him an Irish Peerage as Baron Feenix. Later, having married a second time he removed to Gloucestershire. From him was descended Augustus Molyneux, 5th Baron Feenix, who had played a considerable part in Edith Dombey's life. Edith Dombey's mother was the Honble. Mrs. Skewton (Clara Molyneux) and the youngest daughter of the 3rd Lord Feenix. Augustus the 5th Lord Feenix died unmarried and without issue, and the title passed on his death with such of the estates as were entailed, to his younger brother Frederick who was in diplomacy. This 6th Baron Feenix was made a peer of the United Kingdom on retiring from the Vienna Embassy. His eldest son succeeded to the title in 1871, married Suzanne Gay-Dombey in 1873, and was the father of the present Earl Feenix.

would have been called 'smart.' Then of course the fact that he was a peer enveloped him with a special glamour for Suzanne—a romantic girl of twenty living in a suburb and belonging—so far as they defined things then—to the middle class.

Her father was wealthy, his daughters had expensive governesses and masters, they were accomplished and for their time well educated ; they rode, they visited much ; Paul when at home asked his friends with great names down to the excellent lunches, the croquet, the six o'clock dinners at Clapham Park, proud to be able to show them such a handsome sister, one with such a witty tongue, and so really talented, though only emerging from her teens. Suzanne therefore was sophisticated ; still, in the 'seventies a Peer stood for much. To marry a peer opened immediately to an ambitious young woman an entry into the circle of the One Thousand People who alone counted in the great world, the world of those who governed. She was fancy free, and there was something about the calm inscrutability of Lord Feenix which captured her fancy. Women even now like to be courted by a Sphinx.

She was quite willing to be wooed, and he for his part had made up his mind to the wooing. Her beauty, he could see, was of the supposedly regal order, or would be with matronhood. With such a wife as that at Court, one's path to a Viceroyalty or a Secretaryship of State was almost assured. The Dombeys were not aristocracy, but they were not far off. For a hundred and fifty years their name had been woven into the history of London commerce. They had been associated with West Indian and East Indian ventures of Imperial moment. A great author, recently dead, had written about them ; and although John Feenix belonged to that reactionary school which was beginning to depreciate this master in character drawing on the pretext that "he could never describe a gentleman"—he who has given us some of the finest delineations of that rare being—the name of Dombey had become one of world-wide fame.

A few days later the two young people rode out to Wimbledon, together with Paul as chaperon for his sister. Paul was already known to Feenix, who despite his constitutional lack of enthusiasm thought he could not be bettered as a brother-in-law and might prove very useful in politics, especially politics leading along the new path of Imperialism. A month after his first introduction to Suzanne under the Cedars at

Tooting he proposed, and in another month, just before Parliament rose for the summer recess, they were married in pomp.

Thus the Dombeys became definitely linked with the Aristocracy, a consummation which might well have been conveyed by Fred Chick to his mother's spirit,[1] if he had been a spiritualist and not a very material-minded stockbroker ; a consummation which to most middle class mothers and authoresses of the Nineteenth Century (before the blasé 'nineties) was a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven, something, indeed, which positively averted you from becoming an Adventist, for you had nothing further to hope for.

Nor was Florence so unworldly that she did not rejoice in the most brilliant of her daughters having reached the status of a peeress. Edith, convinced that the marriage would turn out well, sang *Nunc dimittis* ; and in the years to follow, when, first a girl (Edith) and next a boy (Victor Albert) sealed the seemingly-happy union, Edith Dombey, feeling all at once very tired and grey, struggled no more against the encroachments of cancer, but died in her dear Florence's arms when the birds in the cedar were ushering in the spring of 1877.

Dizzy came into power in 1874, and Lord Feenix commenced his ministerial career as a Lord of the Bedchamber—or whatever is the lowest rung on a Peer's official ladder. In any case it was some sinecure post which brought him into contact with the Court. Suzanne was presented on her marriage by the Marchioness of Wiltshire, and had the good fortune to attract the favourable regard of Queen Victoria. She had four healthy children at reasonable intervals of time.

In 1876 Lord Feenix became Under Secretary for India, and later was sent on a mission to Paris. For that reason and others he and his wife spent 1879 in France. He also accompanied one or two Garter or Grand Cross missions sent to invest foreign potentates with Orders ; and Suzanne went with him. She flirted, allowed her hand to be a good deal pressed, patted, or kissed by August Personages ; rode alone with young and handsome guardsmen, made herself the friend of this young actor, that writer of fiction, this rising painter, or such and such a colleague of her husband's. But although she came near to being larky—as the contemporary phrase

[1] Mrs. Chick was a sister of Suzanne's grandfather, the "great" Mr. Dombey.

went—although she defied conventions, followed her own whim or fancy of the moment, laughed a good deal, cried sometimes over other people's sorrows, did things that her husband thought quixotic and rather too generous, she was never touched by scandal.

She rode fearlessly, rinked gracefully, danced rhythmically, played with a professional touch, sang passably; acted so well in *comédies de salon* that she was impounded by Princess Clotilda Louise to take part in the Royal theatricals of Osborne.

Had she much heart at this time? At a later period of introspection she thought not. Her husband she gave up as a puzzle difficult to solve, and not pressing for solution. She never loved him. . . . I should say.

He had, no doubt, a certain silent, fierce passion for her which he slaked with somewhat of a Sultan's frenzy, though he seldom addressed to her any endearing or tender phrase. Yet—*somme toute*—he was not hard to live with. He was grand seigneur in spending money and in placing it at her disposal to spend in dress and entertainment. But he was so remarkably shrewd and businesslike in the management of his estates that there was no squandering, no living beyond an income, which, despite agricultural depression, was mysteriously replenished in proportion as his fastuous hospitality increased. (Suzanne was dimly aware that her husband, far from despising the City, was very much "in" with it, and that certain financial potentates "advised him as to his investments" so well that he had, in a way, the purse of Fortunatus.)

She sometimes thought he could be jealous if one flirtation lasted too long; but she had a clear conscience, if he were. Partly from natural *droiture* inherited from her ancestral middle class stock, partly because her four healthy living children and the two babies who had died from pre-natal or post-natal accidents were a sufficient anchorage for her affections. The four—Edith, Victor, Walter, and Carinthia —were nice-looking, well-bred children, but the three elder ones scarcely roused her to any heights or depths of maternal love. In disposition they gradually approximated more and more to their father. Carinthia was an unknown quantity at the limit of time—1887—up to which these notes are given. She had been born in a wistful November, and named in remembrance of a summer tour in the Dolomites. Though she would inevitably be called "Carry," she seemed less inevitable in her evolution than the others, and in her brown

eyes there was something the elder children either hid, or had not in their shrewder vision.

Edith, Victor, and Walter were too aristocratic and finely-bred to have obtrusively striking beauty; but they were comely and well-grown, enjoyed uninterrupted health, and inherited their father's inscrutability. They were slightly insolent or imperative to servants and governesses, unflinchingly brave in field sports, loved their dogs, yet corrected them with firmness and without passion. The Dowager Lady Feenix—a clever, malicious, gout-crippled dame who had spent most of her life at foreign courts—thought them dull; but their governesses and tutors asseverated the contrary. Florence, their other grandmother, shrank from them a little, without clearly defining why—it really was that they were too patronizing.

When quite young they appreciated the difference that lay between Brook Street and Onslow Square. Sir Walter noticed nothing except that they grew fast and were always well-dressed, not even that they took his handsome tips rather with the air that it might wound poor Grandfather's feelings if they returned them. "Grandfather," not "Grandpapa." They were of the stock that a few years later invented "good form" and "bad form." "Mamma" and "Papa," "Dad" and "Mumsey," "Granddad" and "Granny" were terms they instinctively avoided in favour of the plain "Father," "Mother," "Grandfather" and "Grandmother." They were punctilious in calling all the members and sons and daughters of the Peerage "Cousin" So and So, if there was the least relationship, and in order to do this they must have studied genealogy very carefully. Thus "Cousin Herbrand" meant the young Duke of Leicester; "Aunt Albinia," the Countess of Fermanagh, "Uncle Bellamy," Lord Swindon (the Chairman of Sir James Tudell's Railway Company, chosen for his title specially to madden the Great Western, then at open war with the upstart Tudellian); while Cousin Enid and Cousin Aloysius were respectively members of the great Brinsley clan which had intermarried with Molyneuxes a hundred years before.

Doubtless the Feenix children had picked up this irritating practice from some more than usually servile governess or tutor; certainly not from Suzanne. When their grandfather was knighted and they were told that henceforth their mother's mother would be "Lady" Gay-Dombey, they smiled little smiles at one another, and had their ears boxed by Suzanne;

the first and last time she ever did such a thing. Of course they did not cry. They merely raised their eye-brows—Edith to Victor and Victor to Walter—and were freezingly polite to her for three weeks afterwards.

Suzanne however soon laughed at the episode as at other *singeries*; and neither noticed their grave demeanour, nor their resumption of a more intimate and affectionate manner, subsequent to some great occasion, when Royalty had shown more publicly and cordially than ever its appreciation of the beautiful, warm-hearted Lady Feenix. With their Uncle Paul they were on their best behaviour. They realized he had a sarcastic tongue. Edith admired him sentimentally for his good looks; Victor and Walter were impressed by his resolute and quiet dominance over many people honoured in Debrett.

CHAPTER VII

A BUNDLE OF LETTERS

Falaba,
Xmas, 1879.

DEAR LACREVY,—

I was so glad to hear in your last delightful letter of October how much better you were, how well you had got through the lectures at Cambridge and how there was a distinct chance you might get cured. After all, one knows lots of men who have battled through life on a single lung. Take Sullivan's or Grétry's case, for example. . . .

This better news was only received by me a few days ago. It took a long time to reach me, by the well-kept hands of a civil-spoken slave-trader who was going up country with trade goods from the Bulombel coast. I am writing from Falaba, about two hundred miles inland and not far from the sources of the Niger. I got leave *at last* to make this journey. J. B. was in a better humour than usual. The C.O. sent him back last winter with a flea in his ear. . . . They were pleased to write very appreciatively of what I did during the epidemic. The Chief Justice, who is an awfully good chap, spoke up for me when on leave, and the Sec. of State rather grudgingly approved my proposal to explore the routes to the Niger.

So here I am where Winwood Reade wrote his *Martyrdom of Man*, not many years ago, in a Fula town of Muhammadan Africa. But it was the getting here that was packed full of thrilling episodes. Here goes for a description:

I was asked first to investigate cases of cannibalism and "were-leopardry" in the Mampa Bush; so I went by steamer to Sherbro and thence up through Kittam Creek to Lake Kassé. (This was undoubtedly the limit of Hanno's celebrated voyage—he probably got his "gorillai"—chimpanzis—from the forested islands of this lagoon.) Hence I started inland with my porters and hammock-carriers, through a low-lying, hot, swampy, densely-forested country. . . . Well, at last we got to Bandasuma town, the headquarters of Pa Koranko—or Joseph Williams, as he prefers to call himself (Pa = "father" and "chief"). Fancy arriving in a hot-bed of

mystic cannibalism at about 10 p.m. ! Road—or rather path —pitch dark, winding through a suffocating forest—pools of water into which we fell, snags, roots, thorny branches, hooked lianas, venomous euphorbias, stinging pendulous bean pods, huge beetles and cockroaches, bewildered by the torches, flying in one's face, sandflies biting till one's face and hands were puffed and sore, the porters smacking leeches from their ankles and dropping your boxes of breakables as they do so. Then the terror of laggards, lest they be pounced on out of the darkness by real leopards, or still more horrible human imitations . . . and the alarming noises and cries from the forest—tree-hyraxes, owls, goatsuckers, or an occasional amorous wild-cat. (To my men all these emanated from demons ; it is I who make the guesses at their real origin.) Then at last the path widens and hardens and we are in a cleared space, and can make out native houses both rectangular and round—not mere huts—and smouldering fires, suspicious, naked black men like wraiths behind the pungent smoke (pungent as a mosquito-fuge. . . .) Much palavering in unknown tongues . . . halting and moving on again . . . whispering. . . . At last a burly man in a chimney-pot hat, a black clerical coat (had he eaten the missionary it once contained ?) and a gaudy loin cloth pushed his way through the clustering crowd of very musky niggers and said, " I Chief Joseph Williams, all same king dis place ; you be Govamana man ? Or-right. I show you where you go sleep." . . . To my infinite relief (for I was *dead* tired, very wet, and very hungry—it had rained all day) he led the way to quite a decent dwelling. . . . It was dry and smelt pleasantly of some herb. There was a native bedstead covered with thick cotton cloth or quilts from up-country. I stripped and had a hot bath, got into a sleeping suit and mosquito socks and a native " tobe " (which I use as a dressing gown). . . . By this time the Chief's " chop " was ready—a peppery stew made of yams, sweet potatoes, plantains, red chillies, okroes (a delicious gluey vegetable, bud of a mallow), and all sorts of meat and fish. Jove ! It *was* good. I was *so* hungry I should have eaten it just the same if they had said human flesh from the last " leopard raid " was in it. . . .

The next morning—I had slept gloriously—I really felt ashamed to proffer charges of anthropophagy and inquiries about Human Leopards ! However . . . . . Of course I could only accept his assurances that he was a Wesleyan and a Church Member. How could I expect them

to incriminate themselves? And what was I to do if they did? I only had two black policemen with me as an escort and twenty porters, who would have bolted at the least disturbance. So I reserved my opinion. . . . They all looked so sly, so sensual, and *so* furtive. I expect they are all cannibals when the craving comes on them, and enjoy the extra thrill of fastening cruel steel claws on their knuckles and leaping on to their victim to lacerate him. (One of my police ferreting about in the natives' houses actually found this apparatus, and my host came near to losing his self-possession—said it was "poor Bŭsman Juju"—Pagan religious emblems!) *Why* they crave for human flesh—professed Christian converts some of them—amid this wealth of good food, I cannot think. . . . However I got enough evidence for my report, and recommended this time a solemn warning. Nothing was proved against any individual. . . . With relief I left this uncanny town (where the whispering got on my nerves) and marched northwards. . . .

Are you wearied with descriptions of tropical forests? The reading public would be, but not you, with your record in botany—wonderful genius that you are! Well: here is a glimpse for you. . . . The Bayima country is hilly. The cannibal country to the south is flat, and I admit (grudgingly) a little monotonous in scenery of a vegetable Venice kind. But here in Mendiland is surely something of surpassing beauty? . . . We climb to an eminence up a black peaty path (an old elephant track, I should imagine—and the chimpanzis, unseen, are hooting at the pioneer porters) and look down into a dell three hundred feet deep, so that the crowns of the tall trees that rise from the bottom are on a level with my eyes. But there is no sky background behind them, for across the dell the forested hillside rises a thousand feet till it canopies the scene and provides a gorgeous tapestry of leaf, flower, palm and fern frond, gleaming with grey-white, pinky-white branches. But these nearer trees. . . . Their trunks are festooned from base to fan with twenty kinds of epiphytes, each tall tree trunk, each palm stem with its *chevaux-de-frise* of frond stumps is a botanical garden in itself. They nourish colonies of ferns—feathery pinnate maiden-hairs, grotesque "stag-horns" (blue-green-white in colour, with rust-red dead fronds), hart's tongues like flat serpents, wiry ferns, filmy ferns, and iridescent lycopodiums. Then there are fantastic foliaged aroids with indecent spathes and spadices which draw guffaws from my weary porters, arums with huge fenestrated

leaves or with exquisitely shaped triune leaves of three bright colours. There are orchids with sprays of white flowers six feet long; or with bouquets of orange or mauve flowers. There are sword or bayonet-leaved plants that might be relations of the pine-apple—and all this on one tree-stem up to the forking of the branches. Several of the huge trees are in flower—yellow, white, lilac, cream-colour, scarlet clusters. If no flowers are visible one is arrested by their superb foliage. Or if not flowering themselves they are the dummy over which is draped the most exquisite mantle of creepers, and these are covered with flowers, bracts, or sepals that range from scarlet to lavender-white, lemon yellow to dark orange. In the undergrowth are tall ferns, tall arums, with purple spathes, yellow ground orchids, innumerable banana-like or canna-like plants, or shrubs with bracts of snowy white orit vid scarlet—but so I might run on. It is impossible in words to convey any idea of the infinite variety, the lovely tints, the grace or grotesqueness of form, the rampant growth of these equatorial forests. The naturalist who calls such scenery monotonous is colour-blind, or for sheer contrariety should suffer *peine forte et dure*—be stung by the six-inch long scorpions—purple and yellow, if you please . . . that are found in these glades.

Yet I—and still more my porters—was glad to get out of the Forest country into the open park-lands with occasional tree-clumps, and still more on to the grassy downs and bare mountains of the North. I felt on entering the first Muhammadan village a sense of returning home, of getting back from the Miocene to the Recent period. The air blew fresh and was grass-scented; no more enervating hot-house perfumes or nauseous arum odours. Cattle grazed on the hill-sides. The people—men and women—were picturesquely clothed in Oriental style; the houses though round and thatched had shining walls of polished clay, with clay terraces verandahed round them. These were closed with very ornamental doors of elaborate carving. Busy industries were everywhere going on, though all left their occupations for a minute to gaze at a white man—a hideous monster which only a few of the men have ever seen before in Bulombel; the women and children never, so that they fled shrieking. But before they caught sight of this abnormality they had been pounding grain and grinding it, making clay pots, splitting bamboos, forging iron, or plaiting grass mats. . . . In place of the horrible fetish house, with its stones or mounds of sacrifice

outside, and its jujus, mummied horrors, human remains and obscene statues within, there was a mosque in a public place which linked me at once with the Children of the Book and the immemorial East. It is true it was built of sun-dried clay and that its minaret was funny—a cone of clay stuck all over with protruding sticks, like a tall tipsy cake bristling with almonds. But its clay architecture was rudely Saracenic —a link, when you come to think of it, with the Byzantine Empire, in the heart of Guinea. Inside—no fanaticism prevented my entrance in stocking feet—in the cool gloom there was reverent emptiness, so far as accessories went ; but there were squatting, bowing, quietly-murmuring worshippers of an unseen God. . . . Never felt I better inclined towards Islam. . . .

Falaba, which I reached a week ago, is the capital of a polite but undoubtedly suspicious Fula kinglet. He is a handsome man, albeit smallpox-pitted ; of pale complexion, bearded—looks like an Arab and yet like a Pharaoh ; but with a negroid tinge. . . . I asked to be lodged in the hut where Winwood Reade had lived for three months ; but they were vague and some thought that particular dwelling had been burnt down. . . . On the whole my reception has been satisfactory, and to my unspeakable joy I am to be allowed to reach the infant Niger, with guides and an escort. Did I tell you I spent some of my leisure at Port Liberty, learning Fula, Mandingo and West African Arabic ? This has made *all* the difference in my dealings with this Fula Kingdom.

EUSTACE MORVEN.

157 Harley Street,

DEAR MR. MORVEN,— *March* 25, 1880.

Your long and interesting letter to Alfy only reached here a fortnight since. Father has handed it to me to answer. It must have arrived just as my darling brother was dying. Of course it was *days* before we could bring ourselves to deal with his correspondence, which was *enormous ;* though I doubt if any letter writer was more valued by him than *you* were. He had *such* a high opinion of you, *such* a belief in your future—which *I* am sure will be justified.

Your letter was of absorbing interest, even to slightly educated me—a mere woman—as darling Alfy used to call me —in fun—you know how closely we were associated in our studies? Never was there—or do you say " were there " ? —brother and sister more devoted to each other than he and I.

Your letter begins with hopes about his health. Yes: he had an extraordinary revival which deceived us all. But we returned—he was so restless—too soon from the Riviera, he caught cold in that infamous Channel crossing (Oh! that South Eastern Railway and its wretched steamers, which only offer a choice between asphyxiation in the cabin and pneumonia from the north-east wind. I should like to murder its whole directorate). And the end came quite suddenly. . . . I can't write more about it just now. My tears blind me so. He could not speak in the last six days of his relapse, but he wrote these precious words on a piece of paper which I enclose. They run—in case you can't read the shaky handwriting—and the dear never wrote *very* legibly, did he?—"My love to Eustace, and first subscription to his Niger Exploration Fund—A. H. Lacrevy, £300." And I am to say that Father will see to the sum being placed at your disposal from Alfy's "estate." We don't know where you bank, but you had better—Father says—draw on him. *Don't* stop writing. Write to *me*, and say just what you would to Alfy. I am not easily shocked—I am an Art student you know, at the Slade, and I have learnt nursing in the hospitals—my mother is an invalid you remember, and I like to attend to her. All your letters shall be kept against your return, and I hope you will make a book from them.

Alfy never lived to finish his book on Birds. I was doing most of the illustrations. But Mr. Tudell, his pupil, will try to complete the work.

Father and Mother both send their kindest regards. Poor Mother is *prostrated*, naturally—No more for the present from

Yours very sincerely,
ADELA LACREVY.

From Harry Morven, F.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Northampton,
March 30, 1880.

DEAR OLD MAN,—

Thanks awfully for the cheque. But I think we won't spend it on a silver mug, but buy something more useful for the little chap. I dare say he will be like me and not mind what he drinks out of so long as the liquor's good. Mildred suggested a cradle, but I told her a modern doctor disapproves of rocking infants. I suppose I *am* a modern sawbones, but really when I read in the *Lancet* and other medical papers of all the fuss they are beginning to make in professional circles about antiseptics and germs and other French notions, I ask

myself if I'm not a bit behind the times. But I expect these fads will pass as others have done. There's Richardson saying we mustn't touch alcohol—Rubbish !—and Stevenson writing against meat, and Elvey recommending hot water for dyspeptics. I'm quite content to jog along the good old ways, and I bet you I don't lose a greater average of patients than any other general practitioner : even though I don't wear gutta percha gloves and messy overalls, and wash my hands every ten minutes in Condy's fluid. There are *some* women *will* get puerperal fever after childbirth, even if an angel attended them ; and as to measles, why the sooner children have 'em and get over 'em the better.

Talking about the *Lancet*, I enclose you a cutting in which you are mentioned. You've written some report on " Anthropophagy pathologically considered " which seems to have tickled some of these old buffers. I always thought you ate human flesh because you dam well couldn't get any other. I remember, by-the-bye, hearing an odd story when I was at Bart's. . . .

* * * * *

I also saw in the papers that your great friend Lacrevy was dead. I believe the Mater has gone or is going in state (which means a four-wheeler) to pay a visit of condolence. I hope it will go off well. Some of her visits on these occasions don't unless it's only Adventists. She has a way, first of all, of saying it doesn't matter, and before a few months are over we shall all be united at the Second Coming ; and then recollecting she isn't speaking to the Elect, and regretting they can't have that hope. However, there's one thing about her : she's a *lady*, and a dam good sort into the bargain, and when she *does* make these *faux pas* the people generally deserve it. I'm afraid you'll be awfully cut up about it. But it's a world of sorrow as well as of sin, and if I could only bring myself to believe as Mother does that it's all coming to an end, I should feel a good deal happier. Not that *I've* so much to complain of, not having your brains. I've got a good wife and my practice is growing ; but somehow my kids contract every infantile malady that's in the town, and Mildred gets about worn out with nursing them. . . . I was interested in your account of native gynaecology. By the bye, there was a case of wrong presentation here the other day that was a fair licker to me. The woman was the wife of a bricklayer and . . .

Take care of yourself. Keep your bowels open and wear

flannel next your skin, and, please God, we shall see you back before long, none the worse for your discoveries.

Your affectionate brother,

HARRY.

From Mrs. Morven.

Islington,
March 31, 1880.

MY DEAR SON,—

I don't know where you are now—hundreds of miles from civilization *I* dare say. But unless you get newspapers I must prepare you for a *great sorrow :* Your friend and master, Professor Lacrevy, died on the tenth of this month after *quite* a short illness. I saw the announcement in the *Standard*, and as soon as I thought the worst grief might be over, I ventured to drive there and offer my *sincere condolences*, because of his kindness to you. Until I gave him my card, the butler was doubtful whether anybody was in, but on seeing the name he thought Lady Lacrevy was at home. I found them all in the drawing-room—Sir William, his wife and Miss Adela. Lady Lacrevy, who is rather an *ample* Lady, was reclining on a sofa. I begged her not to get up. Miss Adela was pouring out tea and is indeed a sweet young person. I was *quite drawn* to her. They all spoke *so* warmly of you ; I had little idea you knew them so well. Adela—as she asked me to call her—said in rather a low tone (for any direct mention of her dead brother *so* affects his mother) that the Professor had bequeathed some money to you on his death-bed, so that you might continue your researches. We talked of course of common-place things for the most part—how tiresome was this new wood paving that wore out so quickly and poisoned one's eyes in a high wind. But at going I tried to say *something* consoling, about our Glorious Hope (assuming of coarse that they shared it). But Sir William only said drily " Just so," and Lady Lacrevy burst into such floods of tears that I left the room hurriedly with Adela, who waited with me in the hall till the butler got a cab.

I had not seen dear Florence Dombey for something like two years. Not long ago they had moved from Clapham Park to 102 Onslow Square, so I thought I would go and see them and find out what had happened to them all in the interval. *Of course* as a rule I do *not* approve of visiting on the Lord's Day, though I do not think it *wrong* if the visit is in some way associated with Church going.

Now it so happened I wanted to hear a very remarkable

preacher at our church in Chelsea. He is giving a series of sermons on "The Number of the Beast," and has arrived at the *most* remarkable conclusions; even Mr. Gladstone's abandonment of Candahar (which we all regret so bitterly) seems to coincide with the events that are slowly but surely pointing to the rising of Antichrist in the Russian Empire. (Why, oh why, does Mr. Gladstone play into the hands of the Enemy of mankind, as you might almost say, and correspond with this Madame Novikoff? Lady Feenix told me *she* hated him, and that Queen Victoria—but mind this is *strictly* private—did so too.)

Well, as I was saying, I wanted to go to our Chelsea Church, but the drive there from Islington was *rather* a serious proposition for an old lady of seventy-one. I have had palpitations lately that have perturbed me not a little. Harry writes recommending a cordial, but I naturally replied that being a firm believer in homeopathy I should be content to take pillules of Digitalis. However to come to the point—I fear I am rather discursive, but whenever I write to my dear boy, I just "let myself go"—as the slang phrase is. It seemed to me that if Florence lunched as late as half-past one, I might easily get there in time after church, and then—knowing *how kind* she is—lie down a little after lunch and return home *quietly* in time for supper. Outings like this, which are not frequent, I arrange with good Mr. Weller of the livery stables, you remember, near Hamilton Crescent. He always sends me a *nice* brougham, driven by a quiet, respectable man, who puts up somewhere during my visits and gives me *no* bother.

So after a truly wonderful and uplifting service and some remarkable words of prophecy (I thought the sermon however a *little tame*, and it had too much *geography* about it—almost sounded like one of those *very dry* papers at the Royal Geographical we used to go and hear when you were a student,) I found myself at No. 102. A handsome house, I should *say* almost a palace, with quite a large garden. I was rather taken aback at the extraordinary decorations inside. Florence, who laughed a little about them, says they are all Lucretia's doing and were designed by a man called Morris, who also writes poetry. (What are we coming to?) I tried to praise but *really* I could not. It all seemed a confusion of green and gold pomegranates, with a very slippery black and white marble floor to the hall—and the hall was *much* larger than was necessary and had *a fire-place* in it and *high wooden settles* and pictures. There was a thing called a "dado" running

round every room from the floor up to about three feet, and between the top of the wall-paper and the ceiling was another narrow space they called a frieze, and you must have your dado and your frieze *quite* different in colour or design from your wall-paper. The ceilings, too, were not plain, with a nice moulded rose in the middle for the gas to come from ; but were full of ornament, and borders and I don't know what else. Then there were lots of blue china which did not seem to me to go *very well* with the olive greens and dull reds and gold and browns of the different wall-papers.

The big drawing-room was thought to be Lucretia's great triumph ! It was done in—I quote her words—" amber, gold, ivory and ebony," and they all " portended " something. There were three drawing-rooms. The one we first entered was done in peacock blue, ultramarine, dark brown wood, and pale buff. It made me feel quite *faint*. But the last of the three drawing-rooms—Florence's boudoir—I thought *really* beautiful, chiefly rose colour and grey, with black and white. When you looked right through with the folding doors thrown open I must say the *effect* was *striking* though revolutionary, and—I *can't* help adding—somewhat pagan. Lucretia said, " Why, *of course ;* that's why Mr. Tadema likes it so much." I was sorry to hear this because after his paintings of the early Christians awaiting martyrdom in the arena I had always looked upon Mr. Tadema as a *Christian* painter.

I was rather dismayed at finding so many people at lunch, but Sir Walter was very kind and thoughtful of my comfort. The company included Lady Feenix (their third daughter) ; Frances—still unmarried and *entirely wrong* in her religious views ; Lucretia ; Mr. and Mrs. Paul ; Perceval Dombey ; and Miss Knipper-Totes. So we were *ten* in all. Miss Knipper-Totes was rather a plain young woman of thirty-four or thirty-five, dressed carefully but I thought rather *mannishly*. But I admired the neat way she did her hair. She had a great deal to say for herself and was *quite* a self-sufficient young lady, with no very good opinion of men. They generally *are* like that when they have not married. It seems she had been educated *like a man* at some Cambridge college and had taken a degree—or at least had qualified herself to take one *if* she had been a man. I enjoyed the way she snubbed that intolerable Percy Dombey (he prefers to be called Perceval). She was merely polite to me at first, but quite thawed when she heard you were looking for the source of the Niger. She asked eagerly if you mentioned botany in your letters. I

said you spoke of the beautiful flowers and that I had recommended you to collect and press the prettier ferns in a blotter. But this did not satisfy her and she said she would write to you herself! Next she talked of blue books and factory acts and slums and many another topic that *we* ruled out of table conversation when *I* was a girl. I ventured to say I didn't believe in people being made good by Act of Parliament; we could only do it by appealing to the heart and through God's ordinances in His Church. Mr. Gay-Dombey said, "Hear! Hear!" but Paul supported her and so even did Mrs. Paul. The discussion made me a little weary; it all seemed *so unreal* beside what *is* real: the Near Coming of our blessed Lord who will wipe away all tears and right all wrongs. However, I have found, sadly enough, one cannot wear one's heart on one's sleeve, and refrained from saying what I felt. Suzanne—Lady Feenix—was *really* kind. She saw I was not equal to the wrangle and engaged me in *such* a nice talk; all about their country place near Tewkesbury and her children's pets, and her journeys abroad, and helped me to understand *many things* that were not clear to me before about poor Edith Dombey and your unhappy uncle.

She took me up to a spare bedroom after lunch and arranged *everything* so that I might lie down and rest, and read if I wanted to, and brought me a volume of Tennyson's poems. You know I am never *narrow* in religion, and I think it is *quite* permissible to read Tennyson on the Sunday.

Then she came and fetched me for tea in the Peacock room. After tea, they persuaded Perceval to read some of his poems (really, I am sure, to laugh at him, but he was too conceited to perceive this). He was dressed affectedly in a style they said had been introduced at Oxford by a young man who was exceedingly clever and original—I forget the name, but I remember that his father was an eye-doctor and his mother wrote fairy tales. And he taught young men like Percy to go about carrying lilies and wearing velveteen coats and butterfly ties. So, at least, Mr. Paul told me. *Well*, you must know this Suzanne—she says I must call her that and not "Lady Feenix," because it is absurd to be formal, considering how all our histories are mixed up and how *good* your dear father was to *her* father—Suzanne made me *laugh* as I have not done for *years*, drawing out her brother Percy and making him recite his poems. One was about a lady with pollen-coloured hair who dwelt in a chamber that smelt of amber; and another compared his love to a pelargonium. He seemed

to have so many loves and they had most of them permitted him to take great liberties—however, I laughed so much that I had to remember it was Sunday. Besides, Perceval grew offended at last and went out of the room with his mother, who tried to soothe him. She left the door of the room ajar and I heard him make use of quite shocking language on the landing ; and *not* complimentary to myself : though why I should have reminded him of the *Philistines,* I do not know. *He* certainly wasn't a Samson !—

Florence begged me to stay to a quite simple early dinner and said the flyman should have his with their servants. Suzanne went and gave the order without waiting for me to say yes. At last, at nine o'clock, I took my leave and another hour found me safe in our quiet home. I am free to confess that the excursion did me *a world of good,* and although I feel deeply sorry over the loss of your friend, I wind up this letter —which it has taken me *a week* to write—*quite* a cheerful old lady. In God's good time such dear young women as Lady Feenix will be brought to a knowledge of the Truth.

My ever dear Son, take care of yourself and come home soon to a mother who wants you *much*. . . .

HARRIET MORVEN.

162 Marylebone Road, W.
April 25, 1880.

DEAR MR. MORVEN,

May I introduce myself to you ? I am Susan Knipper-Totes, and the daughter of the Mr. and Mrs. Knipper-Totes that were so much associated with the youth of Mrs. Gay-Dombey. Your father knew mine, for he saw much of him many years ago when the House of Dombey and Son was being reconstructed. I met your mother a month ago at the Gay-Dombeys' house—one Sunday at luncheon—and she told me much about you. I feel it is almost presumptuous to write with only this much of introduction to an explorer already of the first rank, and it thrills me to think that if I can keep my letter within reasonable bounds a fourpenny stamp will take it out to the sources of the Niger ! Happy letter ! If only I could go with it and cast my eyes over these wonderful lands ! I suppose one day we shall have women explorers. . . . However, to be practical, what I wanted to write about was *this :* to ask you to note specially the *presence* and *range* of the *Shea Butter* tree, and any other vegetable fats and oils out of which *cattle fodder* could be made.

Don't classify me as unfeminine! I have special excuses for working up the subject.

My father and mother died some years ago, to the great grief of Florence Gay-Dombey who was much attached to both of them. My father really came from Sussex, but some years after he married mother he bought up a large farm in Essex which my Uncle William had owned in the middle of the century. My Uncle attributed his bankruptcy to the effects of Free Trade on agriculture. I doubt the correctness of his deduction. But Essex is a trying country for farmers, all the same. My father grew very fond of the place (near Dunmow of the famous flitch), and left it to my brother Walter, who is younger than I am. Agriculture in Essex is going through one of its cycles of depression, and my brother like most of the other landowners and farmers is giving his attention greatly to *pasturage* and *cattle;* especially with a view to satisfying the enormous and ever increasing demand of London for good milk. I am helping him not only out of interest in the question and the property, but because I do a good deal of work amongst the Marylebone poor, and more and more it comes home to me what *numbers* of our children *die* because the poor in London practically *cannot* get unadulterated or unskimmed milk. I had therefore worked out a scheme—but I won't inflict that on the Upper Niger. Profitable milk production, however, in the winter especially is largely a question of cheap and appropriate feeding for the cows. You know, of course, all about oil cake. But oil cake grows more and more expensive, and if—as I should like to see—our dairy business is increased a hundred-fold, we must look ahead and arrange for other forms of compressed oleaginous food for cattle beside what we get from linseed and rape, etc. Now among other strange freaks in my nature was a desire to go in for botany—I don't mean the classifying of plants or making herbariums, but botany in its economic aspects. I have gone rather deeply into the question with Sir Joseph Hooker and Professor Oliver. I met a very clever German the other day who said there was a great future before the West African Oil Palm, not only in the oil of the pericarp but of the kernel, and also before Shea butter (*Butyrospermum*), Then I hied me to the C.O. where I know one of the officials slightly (Mr. Snodgrass). I pointed out that most of our West African ports were within ten days' steam of England by fast steamers, and that if we could ship immense quantities of vegetable fats from Colonies like the Gambia and Bulombel

(where you are), with, of course, railways to open up the interior, it would be a great thing for our dairy and other businesses here and a great thing for West Africa ; and take the people's minds off the Slave Trade—which I suppose still goes on ? He answered, however, very guardedly and thought me a little cracked. (I saw him glance nervously at his calendar to make quite sure it was April 15, and not April 1 !) However, I mentioned the name of Bennet Molyneux of the rival office, the F.O., and this slightly reassured him. Then he said, " We've got a chap, Morven, Eustace Morven, wandering about the Upper Niger just now. Don't write to the Governor of Bulombel, because he's always busy and doesn't like being worried, but write to Morven and put your questions to him." He scribbled your surest address on a Memorandum slip, and like the Deputations that serve so little purpose, " I thanked him and withdrew."

I ought to admit, being very truthful, that I have a further purpose in view if I can get information out of you : the Editor of the Quarterly has asked me to write an article (in the guise of a Review of Professor Stapf's book) on the *Vegetable Resources of Africa*, and I hunger for the guineas it will bring in, because I am always over-spending on my Marylebone experiments. Perhaps I ought to go shares with you and send half my honorarium to your exploration fund ? I know that delightful Adela Lacrevy, and she told me her brother recently dead was not only your instructor in zoology but had left you a sum of money to prosecute these researches that are beginning to be bruited abroad.

I hope you will get safely back to the coast and find out lots about Butyrospermum parkii ! And that we may meet when you *do* return to your anxious mother, who is so proud of you.

Meantime, believe me your very respectful admirer, and really a sort of kinswoman, for we are linked by that wonderful Dombey family. . . .

Susan Knipper-Totes.

CHAPTER VIII

PAUL'S LOVE STORY

IT was a sunny day in April, and in Portland Place, 1882. Diana Dombey sat writing at her bureau in her tastefully furnished morning room. Her classic brows were drawn together in an unconscious frown as she collected her thoughts. Diana was composing a difficult letter to the Bishop of London, on the Music Halls. She had paid them a series of surprise visits, chaperoned by a stern-looking Scotch maid, and the effects of the two of them on the motley promenade-crowds (like two Virgins at the Rout of Comus) would have inspired a most amusing essay if she had had any sense of humour.

Paul entered dressed to go out, and a despatch box in his hand. She still frowned as she gazed at him for a moment; then wrenching her thoughts from the Canterbury Music Hall, she smiled pleasantly, looking like a condescending Minerva, and said: "Come to wish me good-bye, I suppose? Well, dearest, *good-bye*" (and she proffered a cheek to be kissed), "and I do *sincerely* hope all will go well. *Have* you taken plenty of camphor pillules? Because Russia in this transition month is *very* catch-coldy. I hope you've remembered goloshes? It's a pity in some ways you can't take Saunders, but I suppose he packed for you? Shall I come and see you off? But you're going from Cannon Street, aren't you?"—"Yes, I must see to a lot of things in the City, and then leave by the night mail—so—Good-bye."

"*Good*-bye, dear." And Diana turned once more to her writing.

Paul looked for a moment at the profile of her perfect face, pale yet tinged with the ordered flow of healthy blood under a white skin. The frown had come back as her pen travelled over the paper. Her dark hair was very smooth and there was an ample coil of it on the white, shapely neck. To the left was a tall window with a view of sunlit house-fronts; and the interior window shelf was fitted for all its length with a bronze-covered box, filled with growing primroses. Prim-

roses were the only flowers in the room that day. Their faint fragrance impressed a virginal spring on the senses; their pale lemon yellow and eye of chrome went very harmoniously with the pearl greys, the blacks and whites and ruddy browns of the Quakerish room. It was the 19th of April, the anniversary of Lord Beaconsfield's death, and Diana—by all the contrarieties—was an admirer of Disraeli and a dispraiser of Gladstone.

Paul turned on his heel after this thirty seconds' survey, and left for St. Petersburg in the evening.

His journey to Russia need not occupy us. I know next to nothing about its object, but surmise it had something to do with transport across the Pacific to Vladivostock. Whatever it was Paul concluded it so much to the satisfaction of the Russian Government that he found himself surrounded *de tous les égards;* and prepared to return home in the middle of May. At the Warsaw Railway station somebody took his ticket for him to Berlin and he scarcely realized there were any passport formalities; and when he was admitted to the platform he found a saloon carriage and adjoining it a salon-lit reserved for his exclusive use. He was to be the guest of the Russian Government to the German frontier. The official friend who came to arrange these matters then went off to buy books for him and see to other details.

Paul stood on the platform waiting for him to return. As he did so he noticed a distinguished, long-whiskered personage approach him with an attractive young lady on his arm who looked a little abashed. "Monsieur—or should I say Milord?—is English? I heard him speaking in that language with my acquaintance Monsieur de Kovánof. Is it permissible to ask of Monsieur a very great favour? Here is my card" (and he drew himself up and saluted—on the card was a long inscription in Russian, winding-up with—in French—Aide-de-camp à S.M.I. . . . Paul took the card). "The favour I have to ask of Monsieur is that he allows this young lady—Mees Smeef, a compatriote—to travel in his carriage—which I perceive is reserved—as far as Eydtkuhnen. We are well aware that the request is unusual, but Monsieur will perceive that the compartments reserved for ladies are all full, and this young lady who is in a sense under my charge is nervous about travelling with men who perhaps have not good manners."

This conversation was of course in French. As Paul was considering his reply, M. de Kovánof came back with books,

papers, cigars and pillows—carried by an obsequious porter. The escort of the young lady turned to him with a smile and said a good deal in Russian. Kovánof replied in French, " It is for Monsieur Dombey to decide." The English girl, confused at his silence, was saying to her companion, " Non, non ! M. le Comte ; il ne faut pas persister. Nous devenons inconvenants ; je m'arrangerai comme je peux ; du reste, en route il y aura moins de monde." Paul settled the matter trenchantly by saying, " Mais je crois bien ! Que Mademoiselle dispose de mon compartiment comme elle veut. Are these your wraps ? And your books ? Do *please* get in."

M. de Kovánof, as he walked away with Count Vassiliévich, shrugged his shoulders slightly. " Après tout, ce n'est pas mon affaire. Ce drôle d'Anglais !—il est bien, n'est ce pas ?—qui était comme de la glace quand je l'ai présenté à notre Corps de Ballet : il veut son petit roman ; et cette miss est jolie, 'pas à dire ? Et toi, mon brave ? Eh ! Eh ! Tu t'en dérobes ? Hein ? Une jolie petite maîtresse, qui est devenue de trop ?—Gouvernante de tes enfants ? S'en va en vacance ? "—and then plunged into other talk in Russian ; having done justice first to his reputation as diplomat by badinage in the naughty French tongue. (At least I suppose all this —I have very little to go on in this chapter but deductions.)

The train started. After arranging everything for her comfort and learning that so far from tobacco affecting her unpleasantly she *loved* the scent of a good cigar—" and you can't live in Russia without taking to cigarettes ; see I have a case full, and I will smoke one if you will light a cigar "—Paul took stock of his companion, discreetly of course, and in occasional glances. She was not tall, neither was she short, figure rather boyish and slim, yet not thin. A round face and a wealth of rich brown hair under a trim toque of sable. The eyes were a yellow brown—perhaps one should say light hazel, but they were rather more the tint of a lioness's eyes, and like a lioness she had yellow-brown eyelashes, long and curled. The mouth was charming, but the nose was a little thick and plebeian—and yet ? No ! it was a dear little nose, only somehow it suggested humility. At this moment she caught him forgetting himself in this survey of her features and parted her lips in a wistful little smile, showing perfect teeth. Then she dropped her eyes. Then she said, looking out of window, " I must really introduce myself a little more. Count Vassiliévich was rather vague. My name is Lucilla Smith, and I have been governess for three years in the Vassi-

liévich family. Now my mother is ill—at least not well—and I thought I ought to go home for a spell. That is all there is about me, so you see I am very uninteresting but perfectly respectable ! I only told you this because there are so many stories written just now about designing young women—anarchists in disguise—who entrap good-natured Englishmen into escorting them out of Russia."

They talked about Russia and she was most amusing, yet kindly, in her description of the Vassiliévich family, both in St. Petersburg and at their country house in the Minsk province. Her face lit up in these descriptions and she acted scenes, imitated accents, brought in scraps of Russian—it was (as Paul thought) as good as a play to watch her. Once or twice a thought crossed his mind that her stories were a little—a little—what one man might have told another ; but he rebuked himself instantly for such a base reflection. There was a charming virginal freshness about her that made such a thought unworthy of a decent mind.

Perhaps she read such thoughts. " You see," she said, " I'm rather a way-worn woman of the world ; I'm twenty-seven ! "—she laughed—" no longer in my first youth "—she sparkled. Then she told him her father had been Rupert Smith, the War artist of the *Graphic* who had died after the Russo-Turkish War at Constantinople—from enteric. And her face was momentarily sad and her under-lip quivered. " *Dear* Papa ! He married very young—a Cambridge Professor's daughter—to me he always seemed like a grown-up brother. The *Graphic* were very good to my mother, and he left her something. She has just enough to live on—at Wimpole—near Cambridge—she devotes herself to gardening and is quite an authority on herbaceous borders—she sells plants through the *Exchange and Mart* and breeds budgerigars—such an ugly name for those sweet little grass parrakeets—in an open-air aviary. But after Papa died I thought I ought not to be a burden on her, and I wanted to do something. I was a student at Newnham—I got to know a Miss Knipper-Totes there and she knew some great people in London who were in touch with the Russian—Consulate, was it ?—or Embassy. That was how we got to hear that the Vassiliéviches wanted an English Governess, and the Russian Consul-General chose *me*."

" Knipper-Totes," said Paul. " Do you mean Susan K.-T., as we call her ? "

" Yes, Susan, and—I won't pretend I don't know she's

some sort of connection of yours, because I think—your name is—Dombey? I heard that Russian gentleman call you 'Monsieur Dombey,' and—and the name is on your rug cover."

Paul explained; and with the link of Susan K.-T. between them, they felt quite old acquaintances. "As a French pioupiou would say, 'Tu es ma payse,'" said Paul, and then both blushed a little at his unconscious familiarity. But she wasn't a bore. After two hours' rapid talk between them she withdrew to the other side and looked at the landscape—whatever the landscape may have been in the St. Petersburg and Pskof provinces.

And it occurred to Paul she might like to rest a little. He inducted her into the Salon-lit compartment and said that was her own special stronghold and sleeping place. He showed her the bolt in the connecting door. *He* could quite comfortably sleep in the saloon on one of the seats pulled out, and with his rugs. After this, as the train stopped, he went for a change into the neighbouring smoking-carriage and exchanged greetings and talk with one or two St. Petersburg acquaintances. Then when the train drew up at Pskof, he rejoined her, in the Saloon, just as a profusely polite *maître d'hotel* with long, pointed whiskers came with an assistant and a folding table. This he set up and secured; and then charged with an ample and delicious lunch. There was a wine cooler with champagne. The *maître d'hotel* opened the bottle, poured out two glasses, and withdrew; accepting a tip but waiving aside all idea of payment. Monsieur was the guest of the Imperial Government.

The train started again. As they lunched and passed from caviare to chocolate creams through many delicacies, as they sipped the sweet champagne, even the gloomy fir forests looked splendid in the yellow rays of the afternoon sun. At Korsovka they had tea; at Dunaburg rather a late dinner. Then each retired to sleep. Paul heard no bolt click, but perhaps the rumble of the train masked the sound. He lay awake a short time, ashamed of his thoughts. Then sleep, scarcely broken by the halt and ticket and passport inspection at Wilna or the jolting change to the Kovno line beyond. He rumbled on in unconsciousness, till a railway porter tugged at his rugs and shouted "Eydtkuhnen."

Every one had to change here, but he saw nothing of his companion. She had got out earlier and taken her effects to the Customs house. Then she had gone to the ladies' dressing-room to wash and make herself tidy; and he having

done much the same for himself saw her emerging into the early morning sunshine on the German platform, radiant and —as it were—sun-kissed.

They had an early breakfast at the restaurant, and then the Berlin connection not starting for another hour they walked out together, exulting in the freedom and absence of passport fuss of what was really—in contrast with the Russia of 1882—Western Europe. They were soon outside the prim little town and in the fields, and noted with delight the abundant spring flowers. Yet Paul felt a slightly jarring impression when his eye fell on the abundant primroses—or what seemed to be primroses—on the banks about the field dykes. What did they recall? Oh yes! his wife's sitting-room at Portland Place. However——

In the train again, bound for Berlin. Paul asked her what her plans were next. "Oh, I suppose I ought to go on to England direct and just drive across to the other station. I think there is some connection with the Ostend route." But Paul said they would not arrive at Berlin till ten p.m. and to start off again, even if there was a train to be caught, would be preposterous. She agreed. Then Paul said, "You know you were given into my charge, and I shall not release you till we arrive at Charing Cross." She looked away and her face seemed a little grave.

He took matters now into his own hands; collected—or a porter collected—her luggage with his own; and one comfortable cab drove them to the same hotel. As she settled herself in the cab's interior, with its first jolt at starting she was thrown against him. He put his arm round her to—well—he hardly told himself what for—and she did not fling it away. At the hotel bureau the clerk said: "Two bedrooms, for den Herr and die Herrin?" priced them from Paul's fur coat and luggage, and said, "On the first floor, Yes?" and Paul being suddenly bereft of German to explain that—well, that they were not husband and wife—silently assented. They walked up two flights of shallow stairs, plush-balustraded, and a porter with their light luggage threw open an elegant sitting-room, off which on either side branched two bedrooms. Paul accepted the situation. He said, as it was late they would have a light supper in the sitting-room. "Natürlich," said the waiter: "And wine?" Paul chose a hock that looked expensive. Soon they were alone, "dégustant un petit souper des plus choisis," said Lucilla. And they finished the bottle of Liebfraumilch or whatever it was. Then:

"*Good night.* And thank you *ever so much.* I can't *say* how lovely you've made the journey."

Paul went to his room. Undressed, donned a dressing gown, lit a cigarette, smoked it, lit another. He lay on his bed, but couldn't sleep. The night was close after a day that had been almost summer. He thought of this and he thought of that, but really all the time he had Lucilla's voice in his ears, her face with its grave dimples, its yellow, brown-lashed eyes and faintly roseate cheek before him. It was twelve; he heard each unit solemnly sounded from some neighbouring church or public hall. He got up like a sleep-walker and entered the sitting-room. Here he drew up the blind and gazed out on midnight Berlin. Very quiet it looked, very respectably bourgeois. He closed the window, and sighed a long, rather vocal sigh. . . . What was that? Surely Miss Smith had not sighed too? Impossible. He could not hear it through a closed, perhaps a bolted door. Was the door closed? Could she be unwell, unhappy—He very gently turned the handle. The door was barely shut; he walked in. . . .

* * * * *

It was morning when he awoke from a dreamless sleep. Where was he? He remembered all at once, and in the dim light percolating through the blind, he saw Lucilla's face turned from him on the other pillow, her cheek resting on her left arm. She was still sleeping. He rose, walked to the window and pulled up the blind. The sunlight flooded the room. A neighbouring clock showed the hands at eight. All Berlin of the working and studious classes seemed in the streets, which sent up a joyous noise of wheels and tram-bells, clacketing of rough boots, clip clop of horses on the asphalt. Children going to school were flying thither on roller skates over the asphalt. Women carried market baskets, the faint sound of their guffaws and their Low German speech reached his ears even through the well-closed windows, the double windows.

He looked back at the bed, overcome now with sickening remorse for which he could find no palliative.

And yet the morning spelt no remorse. The joy of life came up from the streets—he looked at Lucilla. She was awake. Her eyes met his, and her mouth curved into an enchanting, sleepy smile. He walked up to the bed.

"Darling," she said, "I can read your face, but I cannot

let you suffer so acutely. There is nothing to forgive and nothing to regret. The fault, if any, is mine.

* * * * *

"I—I—perhaps you partly guessed—I did not quite truthfully tell you why I was leaving Russia to go home. My mother is not ill—so far as I know—but Count Vassiliévich *would* make love to me, persistently. I tried for two years, nearly three years, to resist him, but—I can't think why—I yielded at last. Then I pulled myself together—but Countess Vassiliévich had found out. She was as nice and as kind about it as you could imagine ; said it was all her husband's fault, he was incorrigible—I was by no means the first. But for the dear children's sake I had better leave and the children must go to school.

"He would insist on seeing me off from the station. He wanted to do all sorts of things for me, he was very rich—but I would hear of nothing, accept nothing more than my ticket, and—and—those sables—I—I thought it *might* be cold.

"Then we were waiting on the platform—we came early, lest there should be any fuss about passports. Presently I saw you—and fell in love with you. You looked such a princely man beside even those Russian counts and generals. . . . The story about the Ladies' compartments was all made up—or at least it was exaggerated. But the thought of having to travel such a fearful long way with Russian women smoking and dreadfully spoilt Russian children eating sweets : no, it was *too* much. So I pointed you out to Count Vassiliévich—and—as they say in books, you know the rest.

* * * * *

"Now don't let us have any vain regrets and spoil the happiest time I have ever had in my life. . . . I dare say in a few hours we shall have to part, each to go our separate ways. You needn't think of me tragically. I shall go to my mother and her cottage at Wimpole ; and presently no doubt you will hear of Miss Lucilla Smith, the celebrated actress ! . . .

"*Do* let us feel normal and respectable. Go and order a *petit dejeuner* to be served in the sitting-room—just coffee and rolls and honey."

That afternoon they left Berlin for Nürnberg. Paul was in no great hurry to return to London ; he had telegraphed all his results to his father in the firm's cypher. Lucilla's mother would be just as *un*surprised to see her in a fortnight as in two days. So Paul over the coffee and rolls—which the

waiter had served with a respectful good morning to the Herrschaften—pleaded for a brief honeymoon, a draining of the cup of pure delight which had been raised to his lips. First they would visit the Toy town, Nürnberg ; then drive through the Black Forest in its full spring glory ; then go to Switzerland and Paris, and so home.

It took twelve days to do this—twelve days of unadulterated happiness. The Black Forest was ecstatic Nature Worship and German fairy tales ; Switzerland was entrancing in the culmination of its spring flower-shows. The passes were no longer snow blocked. They drove from Brunnen on the Lake of Lucerne to the Rhône Glacier, and then down the Rhône valley to Lausanne. Thence to Paris. Two sparkling days in Paris, and at Charing Cross—good-bye. Paul duly noted the address of Mrs. Rupert Smith at Wimpole as the sure and certain means of finding Lucilla by letter, and they said their real good-byes with moistened eyes in the railway carriage between Waterloo and Charing Cross, so as to part quite nonchalantly at the terminus.

They had travelled by the night mail, keeping all the daylight possible for Paris. It was about eight on this June morning when Paul had finally finished with the customs and sent Lucilla and her luggage off in a cab to King's Cross. He went himself first into the City (having apprised Diana of his return at lunch time), deposited his despatch box and a number of important papers, glanced at the correspondence which had been kept during the past few weeks for his special cognizance, faced his father in the senior partner's room, trying to look and feel off-hand, business-like, and filial, and to answer satisfactorily a hundred tiresome questions about the Russian business which was really very important ; and to receive with simulated zest all the family news ; the while his senses and thoughts still vibrated with Lucilla's influence. Then he had a hansom called and drove with his luggage to Portland Place.

There was Diana, cool, immaculately dressed, calmly affectionate, waiting to greet him. The bureau in her sitting-room was piled with correspondence ; but she had put all distractions aside in order to listen to her husband. "Why, how *well* you look, my dear boy ; *ten years younger*, I declare, than when you started a month ago. Your journey has done you a lot of good, and the little détour must have been interesting. Did it remind you of our honeymoon—I mean, Switzerland ? "

There were no more primroses in the room. They had given place to many different assemblages in turn of spring flowers, and the note of colour now struck amid the greys and browns, blacks and whites was due to mauve and rose primulas. And the sunshine without was hotter, more glaring than when Paul had come to say good-bye on starting for St. Petersburg. The blinds had to be drawn completely to shield the dining-room while they lunched, but the pleasant room was nevertheless bathed in diffused yellow light. The lunch, of course, was perfection: Diana was a faultless housewife. Plunged as she was in public affairs she never relaxed her home supervision. Paul realized this more than ever, and now seemed to have awakened from a dream, a dream of guilty happiness, which at the moment he hoped might never be renewed. His wife sat opposite to him, over the lunch dessert and smiled in placid affection and mild admiration of her husband's good looks. He felt towards her—somehow—a tenderer feeling than had ever sprung up before. . . .

"Look here, Diana," he said, "I'm going to give myself a half holiday. Come with me to the Zoo, and then we'll drive down to Ranelagh and have tea?"

"Dearest, I'm *very* sorry, but my afternoon is pledged. I did not know when to expect you, so I summoned one of my committees to meet here this afternoon. We are organizing a Home for Fallen Women at Richmond, where they will learn respectable livelihoods. The big drawing-room is being arranged now to receive them. Miss Delorme, the celebrated actress, is coming to speak."

"But . . ." said Paul.

"Yes, I know what you are going to say. I believe she has been married more than once; but at any rate she *is* a married woman. In private life she is Mrs. Strangeways. Her husband is an actor, and acts under the name of Strongbow. She has sent us a generous subscription. I'm *so* sorry because I really should have enjoyed a half-holiday with you in the fresh air. But there it is."

CHAPTER IX

AND THE AFTERMATH

IT was six months before Paul heard again from Lucilla, and in the interval of time he had begun to think of the episode as of a strange and alluring dream. He actually did not know Lucilla's writing, and stared at the letter for a minute wondering: "What—on—earth——" Then glanced at the end and saw. "L." The letter was not long, but said she wished very urgently to see him, for reasons he could probably guess. She did not like to come to London: Could he possibly meet her at the railway station, Cambridge, about noon. He did, and at once divined the news, momentous to both, that she had refrained from writing. They passed quickly out of the station with a merely conventional greeting and drove to the Botanical Gardens. There in quietude and seated amid strange and beautiful foliage and flowers she confirmed what he had guessed; and they discussed plans.

"Before I knew for certain—I—I was studying for the stage. Then a month ago I was obliged to leave off work and come back to my mother. She is so absorbed with her herbaceous plants and her aviary that she noticed nothing, but agreed with me that I was not looking well; I had been overworking and had better rest with her for a few weeks. My idea is that I should stay a few days longer at Wimpole and that you should make inquiries for some quiet respectable place in London or the suburbs to which I could go—or lodgings would do. I should call myself 'Mrs. Smith,' and let them think my husband was abroad. . . . It is horrid to have to practise such deceptions, but there is mother to be thought of as well as you. No! I don't *in the least* regret, so far as I am concerned, *not in the least.* It is only *you* I am thinking about—Oh, Paul! *How* I love you. How it can be so managed that—that—nothing comes out and spoils your life.

"Until—well, until I knew beyond all doubt what was going to happen I was getting on *splendidly*. That good Susan received me like a younger sister. She knows everybody,

good, bad, and indifferent. She got me an introduction to Bella Delorme, and Bella, though a trifle coarse, is a very kind-hearted woman. She advised me where and how to study, and has promised me when I am trained enough to get me a small part in one of the plays or comic operas she acts in. But of course I must have my baby first, and—and —well—much water must go under the bridges before I can get on to the Stage. But I won't stay idle *a day* longer than I can help. I ache to make myself independent, to owe nothing to anybody. I—I hope it is going to be a boy."

Paul was moved by the news more than he could have thought possible, made strangely happy by it ; yet aghast at the deceit it would entail, the planning and the plotting. With all the quiet emphasis he could command (for he had to speak low as tiresome undergraduates were botanizing) he impressed these points on Lucilla. It was his child that was coming as well as hers. He would make all the arrangements necessary, and let her know. He would pay into the bank nearest to where she went into retirement a sum which would be amply sufficient for her needs—" No ! shut up ! don't waste time and be silly. It is my child you are bearing ; I should be so *sick* with remorse if I did not do everything in my power to save you from anxiety, from heart-ache. I should be a cad indeed if I did not now make myself responsible for you. Besides, as you know, I am a rich man. Leave it all to me. I'll arrange and I'll write."

Telling her mother that she felt ever so much better, but would certainly come down again if her health gave way, Lucilla soon installed herself in a charming little house on Oxshott Heath which Paul had taken for her. There, armed with a cheque book and a substantial sum at the bank, she organized her little household, lived a very quiet life in this wonderfully unspoilt country, only half-an-hour's journey from London and yet empty of people, a wilderness permeated by good roads.

But from that day when they met at Cambridge there began for Paul a web of deceit and subterfuge, a terror of being found out, that veritably poisoned his life. It was a bitter consequence of that stolen honeymoon in Switzerland. There were moods, indeed, in which he came near to wishing he had never met Lucilla, though no one could have been more anxious than she to save him from harm to his name and fame and from the consequences of their joint defiance of conventions. But it might be a boy ! Paul loved him

from the first moment he foresaw his existence. Some father instinct made him resolve to risk much in order that his son should grow up strong and happy and have his life clouded by no avoidable shame. But the straits in which they found themselves over every detail consequent on a birth under these conditions—the problem of birth registration—no fraudulent statement must be made, even if Lucilla had to go through the ordeal of registering him as her child, and she a spinster!

After much discussion on the Heath—for she could not ask him to the house—it was deemed necessary that Lucilla's mother should be told part of the story. So her daughter had to ask her to leave her plants and her birds and come to Oxshott Heath; and had to tell her that she was going to have a baby, so that on arriving she might make no exclamation that would surprise the two servants. Yet Lucilla was determined that the child's real father should not be revealed even to her mother. Everything must be done to save her lover's reputation. Something of the real reason for leaving Russia was conveyed to her mother, and enough left untold to give her a false impression as to the child's paternity.

Mrs. Smith, fortunately for Lucilla's nerves, which were just then at snapping strain, took the enigmatical situation more calmly and even kindly than her daughter had anticipated. She had become so immersed in the breeding of aviary birds and the cross-fertilizing of plants that motherhood under any conditions appealed to her; besides she wanted no tragedy in her life and was of that satisfactory class of mind—satisfactory at least to highly wrought relations—that demurs to fretting over what cannot be helped. It was agreed that the "Mrs. Smith" her daughter called herself should be regarded as the stage name every actress has the right in popular opinion to assume. The arrival of the mother and her seemingly placid and every-day acceptance of the situation, that her—presumably married—daughter was shortly to be confined, silenced any doubts that might possibly be arising in the minds of the two servants—those appendages to our lives before whom, to the very last, appearances must be kept up. Lucilla signed herself when writing in the third person "Mrs. L. Smith," and her mother was "Mrs. Rupert Smith." Certainly, as the cook said to the housemaid, it was a rum thing that both ladies, mother and daughter, had the same surname; "but there," said cook, "it's a common name enough, and p'raps the young lady married 'er cousin. He's away in Russia, I b'lieve. She—

mistress, I mean—was three years in Russia, 'er mother said, before she came 'ome to go through 'er time. I expex they ain't civilized in Russia, leastways 'as no doctors or monthly nurses, and it's natral enough she should want 'er mother about her at her first."

So Mrs. Rupert—not without *cuisant* anxieties ever and again, regarding her budgerigars and the effects of February rains on her carnation cuttings (lest they should damp off——anxieties which she relieved ever and again by a hurried trip to Wimpole), stayed with her daughter through her agony and enfeeblement, and did as much as she could toward regularizing the situation in regard to those authorities which, even in 1883, had to be confided in. Lucilla being airily alluded to as on the stage there was great discretion at the Surbiton registry office. Indeed this bringing in of the theatre into a rather disreputable business was some consolation to Mrs. Rupert herself. If Lucilla had still remained a governess or been studying for medicine, this birth of a nameless child would have been disastrous; but actresses and operatic singers in those days lived outside convention.

Indeed, to a great actress a child born out of wedlock in her lawless youth was almost as necessary an appurtenance as a lap-dog or a titled lover. Had not a famous tragédienne from across the water dazzled London and the Court by her acting some few years before, and then at a reception to which the highest in the land were invited presented "mon fils" to the Archbishop, though as yet she was not married?

But complications thickened about little Rupert's birth. A week before the event, Lucilla, knowing what Paul's anxiety would be, wrote him a letter saying that she would arrange through her mother the following plan for apprising him as to the result of the awaited event. If all was well and it was a boy, he would see an advertisement in the front page of *The Times*: "André. A boy. All's well. L." If a girl the necessary variation would be made. If she died in her ordeal ("But I'm not going to, and we shall all be very happy,") he would see: "André. All's Lost. Good-bye," and he must then come down to Oxshott and face the situation. He would find her mother a dear sensible thing. If the outcome was different from any one of these three, something not tragic, but disappointing, a letter would do.

This communication was addressed to Paul at his club. The problem was how to post it without giving away this vital clue. Lucilla therefore said to her mother: "Now,

darling, you must breast another wave and once more give in to my caprice. I want to go to the post ; but it is a quarter of a mile away. I want to post a letter to some one in London who will know my child's father, but I cannot let you see the address. Yet I am afraid to walk all that way alone. You must come with me and turn away when I post my letter." Afterwards she gave her mother the three alternative drafts of advertisement, asking her according to the result to send the appropriate one to *The Times.*

However, on March 2nd, it was the first of the three formulæ that was written out by Mrs. Rupert and given in to a newspaper office at Surbiton, for transmission to *The Times ;* and two days afterwards Paul, with a suddenly flushed face, glancing at the Agony column in the copy of *The Times*, placed beside his seat at the breakfast table—his wife pouring out coffee and glancing at *her* pile of letters—knew that he was the father of a living son.

Mrs. Rupert Smith a month afterwards returned finally to her herbaceous borders and her budgerigars. Her garden had not suffered from her absence and the very perfunctory attentions to it of a single maid-servant and an odd man ; but a number of the parrakeets were dead owing to want of care. She was more upset by this than by the shock to her family honour which had taken place. Lucilla, hearing of this, got Paul to send her down from London (in Lucilla's name) a dozen pairs of cockatiels, and her equanimity was completely restored. Moreover, Lucilla, taking Paul at his word, and salving her pride by thinking she would some day pay him back out of her earnings on the stage, insisted on paying her mother an allowance of a hundred a year on the score of preparing her cottage for the reception soon of her grandson.

The next complication, however, and one that made Paul more especially "grincer les dents," was Rupert's baptism. Both parents were agreed that their son must start in life with as few disadvantages as possible, and therefore be baptized into the Church of England. Neither of them—as may be imagined—was particularly religious, yet both had an unacknowledged reverence for respectability and normality. Had Lucilla and Paul met and married at the right time before the complications in their lives began, they would have gone to their graves as model a conjugal couple as were Walter and Florence, the unconscious grandparents of little Rupert. But baptism is even more awkward than birth registration

for a woman who is not a widow and cannot truthfully quote a husband's name. A clergyman—they thought—might pull a wry face and ask tiresome questions if invited to baptize a child without god-parents at the font. Paul winced at the slightest deceit, at the telling of the whitest of lies. However, at last, after several discreet visits to Oxshott (where he figured as a friend of the absent father, but nevertheless caused pursed lips and speaking eyes on the part of both cook and housemaid)—it was decided—Lucilla being now quite strong—that she should interview the—fortunately old and half-blind—clergyman of the nearest church and say that she wanted her child baptized, that a gentleman from London would come down to be a godfather; but would the clergyman himself stand as the other godparent, she herself being the godmother? He inquired whether she had been confirmed. On this point fortunately she had a clear record, yet had to stop herself in her effusive account of her life near Cambridge lest she gave too great a clue. "And the child's father, my dear madam? Is he abroad?" Lucilla cast down her eyes and murmured something very like "Yes." The cleric, however, whether in addition to not seeing very clearly did not hear over well, accepted her answer, at any rate pressed his question no further.

So, on a Sunday at the end of April when the larch leaf-buds were lovely—an emerald sheen on Oxshott Heath—Paul came down by an early train to Esher, drove out to Oxshott, and thence on with Lucilla, nurse, and child to the church beyond the Heath. They bestowed themselves as modestly as possible in the back seats of this pearl of Norman architecture, with a crusader's tomb, low side-windows, and brasses which would not be overhauled and appreciated for another fifteen years. Paul's figure and tailoring and Lucilla's unconquerable elegance attracted attention from a mainly rustic congregation. Paul shrank from observation, hoping there was no one there with City associations who might recognize him.

As it was, he had been since yesterday fretted with the constant necessity for playing a part and lending himself to deceit. Diana, who could let him go to Russia or the West Indies, Newcastle or Bristol, without a question, showed herself unusually intriguée about his wishing to absent himself for a Sunday visit without her company. She could have better understood a Saturday-till-Monday absence, though week-end visits were less frequent in those days. Paul more-

over was not a very sociable man, had no vices, evinced no desire to run down to Brighton or to play games on turf or cloth. Golf had not yet been heard of outside Scotland. When he first hinted he might have to go off to the country on a Sunday his wife did not so much utter these definite inquiries as look them. And he actually left the matter at the first hint and said nothing more.

But on the Sunday morning of his child's baptism he rose early, scribbled a little note for the still sleeping Diana (saying he must go out of town to see some one), and gave it to glum Maconochie to deliver. She of late had always seemed to scan him with a questioning eye—the grey eye that had once paralysed a Lion Comique in the middle of an indecent gesture. Paul let himself out into Portland Place, sunk in the absolute, soundless peace of a Sabbath sunlit morning.

After the service, the rustic congregation seemed reluctant to melt away. Indeed, most of the women remained, scenting a baptism and of course taking Paul and Lucilla for the interesting father and mother of a perfect love of a baby. Then came the embarrassment of the god-parents' responses, peculiarly grating in their smug orthodoxy to two of them because of their false position. . . . "Their honour rooted in dishonour stood, and faith unfaithful kept them falsely true," was running through Paul's head and was nearly uttered by him in place of the Jacobean assurances he was required to give over his sleeping son in the old clergyman's arms.

Then came the adjournment to the vestry, supremest ordeal of all, for Lucilla filling up the baptismal registry would have to leave blank the space for the father's name. Fortunately the old clergyman had baptized so many infants that he took but little interest in these formalities if his clients were able to read and write. He had therefore turned away while they were whispering over the register, to remove his vestments, thinking of the old wife waiting for him in the church, and the Sunday dinner now due.

Paul put down a handsome fee, murmuring something about Church Restoration Fund. Then they got into the Esher landau and drove away. The minister coming to put away the Register of Baptisms peered at the recent writing, saw the space for "child's father" unfilled up, glanced again at Paul's sovereigns, hurried to the vestry door to recall them, found them gone and out of sight, shuffled back, said "Dear me! Dear me!"

Then decided there was something odd, but that it wasn't

his business, joined his wife, admitted it was a pretty baby, said the name given was Rupert ; and was incredibly relieved to learn from his wife that while *she* was waiting *she* had gleaned the news from a neighbour that the child's mother, who lived at Birchgrove Cottage, was or had been an actress. *That* explained *everything*, and showed moreover that the poor thing *had* some sign of saving grace in her humble respect for the sacraments of the church. He went to his mid-day dinner with a light heart, and remarked how much this glorious sunshine would bring on the apple blossom.

When Rupert was fifteen months old—for Cambridgeshire springs are cold and clammy and he was detained till then at Oxshott—the furnished house at Oxshott was given up to its agents, the maids were dismissed with a handsome surplusage of wages (which caused more mute head-shaking than if they had been underpaid), and the child and his nurse went to live with Mrs. Rupert Smith at Wimpole. The nurse was a discreet and excellent Guildford woman, who had become not only devoted to her charge but to his mother, and thought Paul, as god-father, the ideal gentleman. The old gamekeeper's cottage lent to Mrs. Smith for her life, had been sufficiently enlarged (Paul's money through Lucilla paid the cost), and now provided two more rooms which served as day and night nursery.

Lucilla, who had been studying hard all through her retirement, and latterly, when her child was weaned had been paying frequent visits to the theatrical world, was now anxious, with her son in safety at Wimpole, to commence the great experiment. More embarrassments for Paul ! She asked him for nothing, but her mind worked on his and constrained him to satisfy her desire, and acquit himself of indebtedness for her surrender and his fatherhood. He had—somehow—to get in touch with the theatrical world. This was arranged by asking a favour from some one he didn't wish to be indebted to. The easiest route to his goal—the *début* of Lucilla in a striking Shakespearean part, Rosalind for choice—seemed to be through Bella Delorme, an opulent beauty whose ways and speech and very kind-heartedness made him shiver. His city acquaintances were sure that if any one could manage a speedy revival of Shakespeare, it would be Bella. She could make *anything* " go," but also she exercised influence on the great theatrical Jews, of European or Atlantean birth, who were then and are still behind all theatrical ventures of importance.

So he must get to know Bella Delorme (and yet preserve his reputation !) Of course, he had to make a hypocritical parade of interest in Shakespeare and even to balance things a little by joining the new Browning Society. Naturally, he revered Shakespeare, and all that ; thought some passages immortal—but really what he *did* take an interest in was the West Indian Fruit trade, the shipment of dyewoods from Brazil, the possibility of making Jamaica pay in spite of its occasional earthquakes and biennial hurricanes, the new harbour works and breakwater at Colon, the great Lesseps venture at Panamá, the right food rations for seamen, the seamen's home at Avonmouth, Avonmouth itself as an extension of Bristol, and James Tudell's scheme for bringing the Great Western to order by the Direct Bristol line.

And—to express his thoughts—it was a damned nuisance, with all this on his mind, to have to visit Miss Delorme (Mrs. Strangeways in private life) in her dressing-room at the Alhambra ; or to be chaffed by Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket on his belated love in middle life of Shakespeare's heroines and his impatience to see fresh presentations of them on the London stage. To support his propaganda, he got himself elected to the Garrick, though the only club he could stand was the Travellers', where they let you alone and guests were virtually penalized.

And at the Garrick he had—I believe—to eat broiled bones, most unmanageable and occupying of condiments—and drink forms of alcohol which disagreed with his wholesome intestines. And also to pay court to actors of influence, immensely self-centred, and press critics of uncertain temper ; always with a view of furthering—and quickly furthering because he wanted to get back to Panamá—this Shakespearean revival for the fulfilment of his mistress's ambitions. What stories and theories he had to listen to which did not interest him in the least ! And sometimes whilst he affected to listen, there would shoot across his mind what a comedy *he* could write if he dared call it, " Paul Dombey ; or the Inconvenient Adultery." Did other wrong-doers of the same category have to undergo such punishment ? What a deterrent for a busy man !

As to Lucilla ; of course for her sake and, above all, his wife's, she was not yet 'born,' she was below the horizon. On her own, and through the rather " ceasing-to-be-interested " Susan Knipper-Totes, she was making her way with Bella Delorme. Already she had played two small parts at the

Alhambra with success. The plan of campaign arranged with Paul was first to create the demand, and next to arrange the supply. The putting-on at some first-class theatre of *As You Like It* had to be brought to the point of actuality ; and *then*, through Bella Delorme, the almost unknown Lucilla must be proposed for Rosalind. Amongst the agonies through which Paul passed was having, after he had supported his strange hunger for Shakespeare by a handsome subscription to the newly-formed Syndicate, to parry well-meant suggestions as to the player of Rosalind's part. The average age of the stars, real or potential, was forty. And of course he had to sit and smoke and listen to the recital of their charms and peculiar qualifications by their different backers (with the office clamouring for a decision on freight questions between Bristol and Demerara or an opinion on Lesseps's contracts for Jamaica labour). It was an inferno of puzzledom, which—he hoped—purged him for ever of any further infidelity to a wife he was actually beginning to love.

Yes. The weird outcome of all this turmoil was that he was growing fonder of Diana than he had ever been before, and she smiled on him with an ever tenderer glance. It seemed as though the warmth of his former passion for Lucilla had thawed some icicle in his wife's heart. From the morning she saw him back from Paris and his bee's flight with Lucilla, she had regarded him, thought of him differently. And to Paul—poor worried overworked Paul—she was a haven of rest. A little puzzled about his rage at forty for the dramatic art, yet she felt sure it was a *good* movement since she had an implicit belief in Paul. Moreover she herself was becoming more and more tangled up with the Stage and the Music-hall since they still furnished a livelihood and a screen for the women whom she styled " fallen," but whom she was finding—and thus herself thawing—more and more human, and many very lovable. Diana, however, ran all her own hobbies and pursuits. Without bothering him she defrayed their expenses out of her ample income, and expected him to attend no meetings, concern himself with no cause. To help her he had to consort with nothing dubious or outside the track of the classes he knew. And as regards those Sunday outings ? Well : poor Paul was so hard-worked during the week that he probably required a complete change of scene, air, and people.

Suzanne came to dinner with them one night and chaffed him unmercifully over his Shakespeare craze. " I met Fred

Chick the other night, Paul, and he says the City is quite upset about you and thinks you had better concentrate all your powers of observation not on 'principal boys' but on Lesseps who's getting up a company to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Panamá. Knowing you to be the good, blameless darling that you are, I may go on to say that the coarse mind of the City, judging you by itself, thinks at the back of the whole thing is a craze in middle life for some equally mature darling on the Stage—Bella Delorme is the lady generally bracketed with you."

Diana came to his rescue and said, "I *won't* have Paul teased! He's worked hard enough all his life to be allowed some hobby in his spare time; I'm only concerned that the dear boy shan't overwork himself . . . and you know, Suzanne, he *does* look very boyish still. And as to Miss Delorme"—and here Diana, for her, laughed quite heartily—"why she is almost a *friend* of mine. Her real name is Mrs. Strangeways, and she is one of the visiting ladies at our Putney Home for—for—well, you know—unhappy women who have misconducted themselves."

Paul afterwards thanked her, almost with tears in his eyes, and kissed her cool cheek with unusual fervour. For the first time in his life, also, he felt rancour against his dearest sister, Suzanne.

However, at last the great combination came off, though it left silver hairs below the dark brown at Paul's temples. Lucilla Smith made her début as Rosalind at—was it the Haymarket or the old Her Majesty's? Albert Swiveller was the Orlando and William Strongbow the Duke's wrestler. Bella Delorme in her great good nature and having reached an age and weight when the playing of the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet was regarded as just a very distant possibility, cast herself for the small part of Aubrey.

Lucilla, we all remember (though I being in Africa at the time can only speak from newspaper records) took the town by storm. Or, strictly speaking, that part of London that lives in the *piani nobili* of the Boroughs of Chelsea and Kensington, Paddington, Marylebone, and St. Pancras, and the pleasanter parts of Brixton, Clapham, Denmark Hill and Dulwich. She became the rage. The middle stratum of the Foreign office, husbands and wives alike, went distraught over her voice, her diction, her yellow eyes, her figure—which was neither that of a living skeleton nor the buffoon bulging of a principal boy. (The younger F.O. clerks of course only

cared for highbred dowagers with teeth and diamonds, who could tell witty stories of the Second Empire ; the older men occupied office and leisure alike with parrying Parliamentary questions, drawing up protocols on Egypt and *Mémoires à faire servir* on German Colonial aspirations.)

And the Society above defined felt so happy about the origin of its new darling. " *So* nice, isn't it, dear Sir Edward, to think that she isn't a dubious foreigner with three husbands ! I believe there *is* some story of an unhappy marriage when she was very young—she's only twenty-nine now—I know it as a fact—and twenty-nine, as things go, is awfully young to play Rosalind or Juliet. Why, Miss Violet Fanshawe is turned forty—Yes : these are salted almonds, and you can pass me an olive—I'm also told that from this unhappy marriage of ever so long ago—somewhere in Russia—They *do* say—but perhaps I oughtn't to repeat Court scandal—she has a dear little boy who lives with his grandmother in Cambridgeshire. But that is the delightful part of it all. She really is Lucilla Smith. Why I know *of* her mother *quite* well. She was the daughter of Professor Jenkinson and she married poor Rupert Smith—*such* a nice looking man—I remember as a gairl I was just a wee bit in love with him when I went to see my brother at Cambridge. Rupert Smith worked for one of the illustrated papers, was a war correspondent, and did sketches on his thumb nail which they afterwards enlarged. But he died somewhere in Turkey. And then Lucilla and her mother would have been quite—*quite* stranded—she was at Girton —or was it Nuneham ?—but never mind—*if* Lord Rackstraw hadn't given Mrs. Smith the use for her life of an old game-keeper's cottage in his park. *Of course* the *mauvaises langues at once* said that Mrs. Smith had been—but *you* know what they *always* say. However, then she started ornamental gardening and introduced these herbaceous borders that are becoming quite the rage, and bred cage birds for the *Exchange and Mart*. Lucilla went out as a governess to some noble family abroad, but *always* wanted to go on the stage. You know it was *so* wonderful, I'm told, *how* she did it. She *simply came up to London one day* and called on Mr. Strongbow, Miss Delorme's husband, at the St. James's Theatre—rather a *daring* thing to do, wasn't it ? because they all say . . . but we poor women if we want to make our way have only *ourselves* to rely on. And *directly* he heard her voice he said, ' *You're* the Rosalind for *me*. You're the Rosalind I've been hunting for all over the three kingdoms. You play Rosalind

in a week.' And that's how it was done. Yes, you are on my train and our hostess is rising."

(Thus Mrs. Canon Dombey one evening in the season of 1885. Her husband—Rector of St. Bridget's—was now a Canon of St. Paul's, for no other reason than that he was a brother-in-law of Lord Feenix, was considered "sound" and had not upset any one over questions of ritual. So being a Canon they naturally dined out in higher circles, wherein diplomatists moved and Lucilla was the rage. They lived in Pelham Crescent, and if you had asked Cornelia about Clapham she would have looked puzzled but would have said, "*Oh yes! Clapham?* Yes, I remember; but when we lived there it was *quite* the country and Edward's chest was not very strong just then. Portia was *devoted* to the Common, dear child.")

In those days there lived in Wimpole Street—by a curious coincidence, since we are treating of Lucilla and her fortunes—a sprightly lady whom not to know argued oneself unknown. The Honble. Mrs. March was the wife of a great Parliamentary Counsel, the son of a former Lord Chancellor. He was reputed to be one of the greatest lawyers of the age. "Not in jurisprudence," some other lawyer would remark, when he was discussed. Then another smoker would say, "Well, not in jurisprudence *perhaps*, but certainly in torts and copyright." Another would deny his competence in these and other legal pastimes but would assert his "grasp of our constitution such as no other man has." Again, a fourth legist would eject him from that distinction, but retort that "what he didn't know on the subject of way-leaves wasn't worth knowing." However all agreed he was a man whom nothing but a premature demise (which unfortunately took place) could stop from becoming Lord Chancellor like his father before him. To the lay diner-out he was a solemn but kindly host who was blinded by an eyeglass and never finished a sentence—somehow the eyeglass got in the way. (He died before reaching the woolsack, universally regretted by a large circle and leaving a will which had never been witnessed.) Well: you knew you had arrived when you were asked to dine at Mrs. March's—and to do her justice you long failed to realize that you had failed because once asked, you were asked at regular intervals till she died—full of honours and like her husband much regretted by poor unknowns as well as rich celebrities.

One day Diana said to Paul across the breakfast table, just as he was looking a little less aged—so great had been Lucilla's success that he had not opened a Shakespeare for

two months, and was becoming forgotten at the Garrick—"Mary March has asked us to dine there quite *à l'imprévu* next Thursday, to meet the new actress, Lucilla Smith."

"We can't go," said Paul crossly—he who was hardly ever cross—"I've—I've—got to go somewhere, I forget where but it *is* something important."

"*How* tiresome," said Diana, "and *how* odd. Some time ago you were wild about Shakespeare and *As You Like It*, especially, and now you get quite peevish if I mention either. My own Paul mustn't be so changeable. And you know, what is *so* funny, *I* who used to be so much against the Theatre, though I always loved Shakespeare—indeed, I played in Shakespeare in our college performances at Boston—am *quite* taking an interest in the Stage now, to keep pace with you! I remember now, when this Miss Smith came out some one sent us a box for the first night, and you wouldn't *hear* of going—However, darling, I don't want to press you to do *anything* you don't like. I will write to Mary and ask if she minds my coming alone, as you will be away."

So that was how Diana Dombey and Lucilla Smith came to meet. Mrs. March introduced them and Diana came away from that dinner and its after-party saying that Lucilla was *quite* the sweetest woman she had ever met, but had *such* a *sad, sad* face; and she had pressed her to join her committee for the Richmond Home and be a visiting lady for those poor fallen things.

These two months of Lucilla's vogue and success, this unparalleled run of Shakespearean plays—*As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Much Ado about Nothing*, and even *Measure for Measure*—not only brought to Paul a surcease of worry and anxiety, a strict and profitable attention to the Firm's great ventures, but gave him back intact the Ten Thousand pounds he had invested in the Syndicate; and some hundreds on top as profit. *Mirabile dictu!* And the success was genuinely due to Lucilla's gifts—her beautiful voice, her natural manner (which made even improbable heroines seem probable), her unusual and youthful appearance, due partly to a refusal of the grosser cosmétiques, then *de rigueur* on the Stage.

Lucilla accounted for nearly three quarters of the success, the remaining quarter being the great beauty of the staging—also partly due to Lucilla's influence and learning. Scenery, costumes were all as accurate as Shakespeare's erratic genius in his settings would permit, and—for the time—extraordinarily tasteful. Something was owed of course to the Ban-

crofts' influence, (bless them). Their presentation of the *Merchant of Venice* with Ellen Terry's début as Portia in the late 'seventies paved the way for the success of the Shakespeare Syndicate.

Paul replaced the £10,000 in his bank. Everything he touched turned to profit, it seemed, even Shakespeare. Though wealthy, he was born with the middle-class instinct of thrift, and to allocate so large a sum to an illicit purpose irked him. Lucilla, on the other part, was radiantly happy that she had regained for Paul what he had ventured on her behalf. As to the six or seven hundred pounds in profit, he gave Lucilla £500 in notes and insisted on her spending it and not worrying him with fussy refusals. He bought, out of the rest of his profits, a diamond ornament for Bella Delorme and presented it to her " to mark the artistic pleasure her performance of Audrey had given him." She—to quote her own phrase—" wunk a wink " and smacked him on the back of his well-cut overcoat. But he began to entertain a real regard for this Schneider of the English Stage. She had helped him out of a very awkward difficulty in taking up Lucilla and launching her on a successful career ; and she had done it with—for her—unusual delicacy and a pretermission of questions.

As to Lucilla, she invested her £500 in the purchase of a long lease of a dear, old-fashioned cottage house in a little grove by itself, in the heart of St. John's Wood—now, I think, cut down. Informing Paul by letter, curtly enough, of her contemplated address and how probably Susan Knipper-Totes might share it with her and halve expenses of housekeeping, she received soon afterwards notes for £400, with a half sheet of paper on which was written " For the furniture."

Lucilla was engaged at a salary of twelve hundred a year, when the first three months of her playing had shown her value to the Syndicate (from which Paul had withdrawn after the settling-up). She had a two years' engagement to act in London and the provinces. Paul paid her an allowance for his son's maintenance of £300 a year, so that she and her mother were now in quite affluent circumstances ; the more so as Lucilla's fame had drawn attention to her mother's pretty occupations of gardening and parrakeet-acclimatizing, so that Mrs. Smith became quite in request as a designer of parterres and an adviser on cage birds.

Three months went by for Paul in gradually increasing peace of mind. Then came over him the yearning to see his

son. He did not like to go direct to Wimpole and meet Mrs. Smith, so he wrote to Lucilla—or was it *she* who wrote to him? Or possibly there was no occasion for the dangerous proceeding of the *literæ scriptæ* which so often remain as damning evidence. For though he would in some moods gladly have forgotten this divagation, Fate seemed never tired of linking him to Lucilla. Mrs. March having set the fashion, Lady Feenix and even Lucrece Dombey shared the enthusiasm for the new Rosalind. The fact that she now lived with Susan Knipper-Totes was in itself an-out-of-the-common pledge of respectability; so that if Paul went to an evening party, after theatre hours at Onslow Square or Brook Street, there was Lucilla. Nay, Diana herself unbent as she rarely did, and insisted that Paul should not be a bear, but be present as host when this charming young actress—now outdoing her success in *As You Like It* by a radiant performance in *Twelfth Night*—came to dinner or lunch. Either in a seeming-harmless note or a brief colloquy he proposed running dowin to Cambridge in July and getting her to meet him there wth Rupert. To avoid any question as to special Sunday desecration this time, he simply said he was going north for a few days, beginning with a Saturday. Lucilla could not yet get her fortnight's holiday: business at Her Majesty's was too good. So she could only come down to Royston by the last train on Saturday night. Therefore Paul had to get through alone—somehow—an afternoon (not so difficult, Cambridge is so peculiarly beautiful in summer) and an evening (mortally dull, with the undergraduates gone home and no theatre).

Lucilla drove over early on the Sunday morning, and brought nurse and baby. Together they walked to the convenient Botanical Gardens. When Paul had slaked his interest in and affection for the child—having of course to remember that as a mere godfather he must restrain his feelings within due bounds—the nurse and baby were sent back in the brake to Wimpole, from Paul's hotel, and Paul was a little taken aback to hear Lucilla say to the nurse, "I shall go on from here to London, so you might hand me down my valise. Good-bye, my precious! Mother will see him next Sunday."

When they had driven off Paul looked at her questioningly. She was confused—"Paul," she said, "I simply *hungered* for a quiet talk with you. Couldn't we—couldn't we take a boat and row to Ely, and—and—go our several ways to-morrow?" And so began the fatal *redintegratio amoris*.

CHAPTER X

EUSTACE RETURNS ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE

IN May, 1884, Eustace Morven prepared to leave West Africa for a long holiday in England. He had been nearly six and a half years away from home, in a climate supposedly deadly. His travels in the Upper Niger Regions and about the sources of the Milo and other head streams of the great river (then the dominions of the redoubtable Samori) were remarkable for their discoveries, though he never reaped full credit for them. The publication of his reports was long delayed by the Government, many African boundaries being then in dispute, and African ambitions rampant. When at last they did appear in a Bluebook costing two shillings-and-threepence halfpenny (with covering despatch from the Governor of Bulombel which overlooked all their essential features), they had long been anticipated and the laurels of geographical primacy were snatched by French explorers.

Eustace's mania for exploration vexed the Colonial Office under Lord Knowsley, but it was surely offset by his much longer periods of monotonous administrative work during which he seldom went more than a day's ride or walk or a week-end's boating trip from his headquarters? Indeed, he was away less from office work than his colleagues who were eager to be off the moment leave was due, or could be got on a medical certificate (when they would make for England or the Canary Islands). Eustace, instead of spending his occasional holidays in Europe, spent them in exploring West Africa. He earned and he got promotion. He spent nine months as Government Secretary on the Gold Coast, when fever had depleted the staff. He laboured above all in the office at Bulombel, while fleeting Governors came and went, died or hurriedly quitted, yellow as a guinea; leaving little trace of their brief spell of authority, except that until fever laid them low, it was their great ambition to undo all their predecessors had done and then leave Eustace to clear up the mess and confusion.

The Morven reports of 1883 on the sanitation of Port Liberty,

the sites of the official residences, the suggested railways and roads, have all been adopted *longo intervallo*. Finally he was sent to administer the Government of the Gambia while its principal officer recovered from blackwater fever at Tenerife; and from the oldest of our West African possessions he embarked for Liverpool.

During the past two years his mother's letters expressed an increasing longing for his return. Yet she did not report her health as specially failing. He several times determined to delay no longer, but just as he was resolving to ask or write for leave of absence something occurred to postpone this action: either a colleague fell suddenly ill and left for home, or a rare opportunity occurred for an interesting tour—and all this time the fascination of Africa grew stronger and stronger, while a prudent way of living and no alcohol kept him clear of the worst types of fever. But at last, alarmed at a note he received from his brother, he was on his homeward journey.

During this long exile he had sustained a lengthy correspondence with Adela Lacrevy. Her replies were always cordial, but as time wore on they became shorter and less frequent. She was always punctilious in acknowledging his budgets, and repeatedly assured him they were being taken great care of for his future book. But it seemed to him—especially in the last twelve months—that they elicited less ecstatic and interested comments on their originality and charm, his art of picture-writing "so that she could realize the scene and almost *smell* the place he described, etc., etc." Her own letters gave less and less news about her family, *his* friends and acquaintances, and more and more about her brother's book on the *Comparative Anatomy and Classification of Birds*, which James Tudell, junr., was now preparing for the press with many additions and amplifications.

She dwelt more and more on her co-operation with him. At first apologetically she had alluded to her drawings of bird anatomy as passing from the picturesque to the severely scientific. Latterly she mentioned curtly and knowingly studies of tracheæ, gizzards, feather-tracts, and thigh-muscles, the wayward foot-tendons of some bird groups, the eccentricities of zygodactyly among the Coraciforms—all the jargon of one who is immersed at last in a study which has become a religion.

And this absorption in anatomy and entrails just a little jarred on Eustace, who was extremely sentimental about her

from long pondering on a retained mental picture of her as an Art student of twenty. Nevertheless, he had made up his mind for years to propose as soon as he did return. Surely she must have guessed this from his letters, and she had never repudiated his hints? His finances now would enable him to support a wife as his wife deserved to be supported. (There is always unconscious egotism in such generosity.) Meanwhile he chafed more and more at her constant associations with young Tudell, and would have liked—as he frankly told her—to have heard more of dancing and dressing, the changes of fashion, or how she managed her housekeeping in Harley Street.

At Liverpool there was no letter, not even a telegram, though he had sent one off from Madeira announcing his return. Anxious and puzzled, he left his heavy luggage to be collected and forwarded by the steamer agents and drove across Liverpool to the station. It was a Sunday, *pour surcroît de malheur*, and the then ugliest port in Britain was looking, even on a day in early June, most depressing. All the thrill of his return to civilization after six and a half years' absence was blunted by the closed shops, the occasional frowsy tipsy loafer, the dull yellow-grey respectability of the brick houses surrounding an oasis of smoke-blackened stone buildings of pretentious architecture. Outside St. George's Hall were flaring announcements that the celebrated actress Miss Bella Delorme and her Company would shortly be in Liverpool to play for three days in that tremendous Alhambra success, the "Pride of the Harem." *Rahat Lakoum*—Miss Delorme; *The Sultan of Morocco*—Mr. William Strongbow. Then the cab rattled over cobble stones through gloomy archways and under railway bridges, where the dark, oozy walls had been enlivened by the Liverpool Irish with chalk inscriptions, "To Hell with the Pope!" "To Hell with King William!"

At the Railway Station there were yesterday's newspaper placards with news that seemed utterly strange to him, though already weary commonplaces to the stay-at-homes; but no newspapers. (This was 1884, remember, and the Sabbath still weighed on us sorely.)

The ugliest railway journey in England—almost the only one to be so termed that is long enough to matter—brought him to London in the afternoon. Passing through an inferno of tunnels it entered the low-roofed platforms of Euston. He leaned anxiously out of the carriage window, scanning the faces of the very few people awaiting friends. Was there no

familiar face to greet him? Not even Eliza Cornell? His mother might not be well enough to bear the turmoil of a station, but surely Eliza could have come instead to reassure him?

"Any luggage, sir?" broke his reverie. "Only these things; get me a hansom, please." He followed the porter through the fog-coloured hall of Euston, (with the exception of King's Cross, which then was abject, surely the ugliest terminus in England? The absolute nadir of Art). Then a shaky hansom, rattling and swaying over the bad pavements into Islington. Islington in seven years or so had lost any treed, leisured, suburban look it once possessed, and become sordid or businesslike. As he approached the old home which he had idealized in his exile's musings, he was still more disenchanted. The elms in the garden had been pollarded; the ivy hanging over the sooty walls was grey with city grime. The hansom drew up. He noticed the portico was cracked in its pillars. He paid the man twice his fare in his dry-mouthed anxiety, so as to have no argument, knocked and rang loudly.

A strange and cross-looking young woman opened the door after a long wait. He was beginning his questions (noticing all the time that the hall was dusty and smelt of ancient soups and cabbage-water), when Harry—his brother—came forward with extended hand, but only too obviously breathing a whiskied welcome. "Eustace, old man! You're just in time. Did you get my telegram? I *think* I sent it?"

His mother was dying of heart-failure. Eliza, his old nurse and her invaluable maid, had died two months before and precipitated the breaking-up of her mistress. He hurried up to her bedroom, Harry fortunately returning to finish some interrupted meal. She recognized him, but with no realization of his long absence; seemed to regard his entry as a matter of course; and to know he was there more by hearing his agonized "Mother, darling?" than by actual vision of the eyes. Her eyes indeed looked straight before her, and the things—people—she saw were invisible to the normal eye. Eustace was the student of twenty—she faintly pressed his hand with contentment and murmured something about his classes. Then she continued to talk in muttered occasional sentences with her dead husband, her brother John; even a James, whom she addressed in a sharper tone of affection, surprise, and remonstrance. She told Eustace in a faint, faint voice that Alice Brown—a poor dead woman she had helped

years before he was born—had been to see her and was coming back.

An interval of sleep or coma . . . a slow awakening, and eyes more focused. A voice so faint that he has to bend low to catch her words. "The hope is realized, darling; don't be faint in following on." Some medicine is administered and there is a rally. She moves her head rather more round to look at him. "Eustace, my love, you are changed! What has made you look so old? What a thick moustache!" Harry bends over her for some purpose from the other side of the bed. She once more turns to the favourite son and says, with the ghost of an arch smile, "*Oh!* the whisky!" and makes a *moue* of repugnance. Harry misinterprets her meaning and gropes amongst the medicine bottles for one that contains whisky. Then a long, long spell of coma. . . .

Her death was imperceptible. He held her hand for what seemed to be hours, whilst the smoky sunshine turned redder and redder and at last gave way to grey twilight and that to summer darkness. Harry came and went, with rough sobs and tear-smeared face. At last he tried some doctor's test and said in a louder voice, "Eustace, dear old man, she's gone," and burst out into a boo-hoo that seemed an outrageous breach of decorum in the presence of the quiet dead woman, staring straight before her with lips that just smiled.

It was late at night when he went to his old bedroom. No longer lavender-scented but long shut up, unaired and musty. He slept, utterly exhausted with grief, till late next morning. Then descending red-eyed and heart-sick to the dining-room he found an untidy breakfast table. Harry had gone out to fulfil the necessary formalities. The house seemed uncared for. His mother had long been ailing and confined to her room. The cook, like the housemaid, was obviously a stranger and addicted to drink. He stole up once more to his mother's bedroom and gazed at the figure, rigid on the bed under its sparse covering. Her face in its unutterable peace reassured and calmed him. Everything had been beautifully arranged by the hospital nurse whom Harry had imported when he first learnt that his mother was seriously ill. She moved about the room telling Eustace in whispers these particulars. . . .

Till the funeral at Highgate, Eustace led a larval existence, visiting no one, wandering about the Zoo with unseeing eyes, another day at the British Museum, and a third—with some awakening interest, observing the remarkable changes which

seven years had made in the heart of London—the new roads, new restaurants, new theatres, new railway stations. On the afternoon of the funeral an old Adventist deacon and solicitor —long a shrewd and wise adviser of his mother—brought the will and read it.

Mrs. Morven had died much better off than either of her sons expected. In later years Paul Dombey had insisted on her sharing to some extent in the profits of the firm. She left a handsome donation to her Church and the bulk of her funds equally between her two sons, and also the freehold of the Islington house. The furniture was bequeathed to Eustace and with it all the papers of his late father. When everything was realized, her sons would have at least a thousand a year each, plus what ever the house could be sold for—say two thousand pounds after all expenses were paid. Eustace then and there transferred the furniture to his brother, minus his mother's bureau and some old pictures, and of course the precious papers which were to throw so much light on Dombey affairs in the 'fifties and 'sixties.

Harry took his departure for Northampton, sobered and less careless in his dress since his good fortune. He declared with many objurgations that he would now reform and give up drink ; sell his practice for what he could get, retire into the country, live and die a farmer—all of which resolves he actually kept. For aught I know he is living still, with Bright's disease in the background to remind him of one at least of his good resolutions.

Eustace, promising vaguely a visit at some near date to Northampton, parted with him on the doorstep of Porchester House and felt he never wanted to see him any more.

A pause to shake off his feeling of stunned bereavement. A visit to tailors and hatters and hair-cutters. Another pause till the new things came home. A formal call at the C.O. and written note with his card saying he was temporarily in deep mourning : he would report himself more fully in a week. Then the great adventure, the visit to the Lacrevy's and perhaps the putting of his fortune to the test.

157 Harley Street. Yes. That was the house and the identical doorstep on which he had last wrung Lacrevy's hand before leaving for Bulombel. He rang and knocked in his excitement. A butler, dimly remembered, opened the door, a little offended at such urgency for admission to a Court Doctor. " Er—is Miss Lacrevy—in ? " The butler is

about to say, " No, sir," when something reminiscent comes over him as he reads Eustace's card. " Oh ! Are you pore Mr. Alfred's old pupil ? Why, *of course* you are, sir, though we ain't set eyes on you this—ever so long. Yes, Miss Adela's in, though she's working in the studio and said she wasn't to be disturbed ; but I'm *shore* she'll see *you*, sir ! " As Eustace followed through the hall he said to himself, " He wouldn't have laid such stress on the ' *you* ' if he hadn't thought—— Servants often guess these things " ; and he approached the studio door with hope. . . .

A radiant background of light, and Adela advancing towards him with a most friendly face—surprised, astonished, delighted ! Yes : she is not only as pretty as she was in 1877, but in some ways *more* attractive. Love at second sight rushes no doubt into his eager eyes—the butler has withdrawn—Adela realizing everything in a long look makes up her mind to operate quickly out of kindness. . . . " *Dear* Mr. Morven, I *am* glad to see you, and I am sure papa will be so too—and Mr. Tudell—James. He's in the studio—we're dissecting a Curassow—and I'm engaged to him, you know—I dare say you gathered that from my last letter ? We——"

But a sudden passionate impulse moves Eustace. Almost blind with rage at his shattered hopes, he blurts out something about " only came round to get her news," " mother dead," " mustn't stop " ; and then back into the hall, *somehow*— " where's that *confounded* stick " ; butler angrily pushed on one side, he is walking down Harley Street at six miles an hour, and is in Cavendish Square before he sees normally. Those who have observed him think he has just had a tooth out, and one errand boy turns round to shout something humorous.

A few days afterwards Eustace sent from a London hotel an unnecessarily, a savagely expensive and useless present to Miss Lacrevy, accompanied by a note of studied brevity and colourlessness. He hoped Miss Lacrevy would be very happy, begged she would give his *kindest* regards to Sir William and her mother, and would she mind at her leisure sending back to him that collection of letters she had so very kindly kept for him ?—and he was hers sincerely, and in a postscript added that he would be travelling about between now and his return to Africa.

Adela replied by a piteous little letter which almost had a catch in its throat. His present was *magnificent*—her father

thought it quite the finest wedding present she had received. But—but—she was *so sorry* for him. It was the first news she had of Mrs. Morven's death. And *surely*, after the acuteness of his grief was over, he would come and see them? Her father would be *so* disappointed. Of all Alfred's pupils —his friendship was so dear to them—they were proud of his achievements. She would certainly send the letters. It was no good, she feared, asking him to her wedding whilst he was in mourning, but—at her father's wish—they would live at 157, because he was lonely and her mother so much an invalid. "Mother bids me add——"

To this Eustace returned no answer. His disappointment and his rage were such that he wanted to spite himself. He never saw Adela Lacrevy again till 1910.

Recovering his letters of the last six years and establishing himself in a comfortable flat at Hankey's Mansions (overlooking St. James's Park), Eustace's spirits revived a trifle, and life didn't feel quite so flat. He was glad he had not yielded to the first impulse that overcame him walking away from Harley Street, to go to the Colonial Office and offer himself for *immediate* return to the deadliest part of West Africa. After all, there were other things in life besides love and marriage. A wife and perhaps a family are a great encumbrance in an African career; and dearly as he might have loved Adela (some remembrance of Alfred Lacrevy lay behind this devotion), he had wedded *Africa* first. To Africa he was determined to return; his life-work should be devoted to Africa. He would unravel her secrets, expound her values, reveal her history and paint her inimitable landscapes. He would beg to be sent back presently to complete his great Nigerian project.

In the meantime he would write a book; or at any rate compose the necessary preliminary to a book by reading a paper at the Geographical. So, relying on himself and his undoubted achievements alone as an introduction, he walked across St. James's Park and up St. James's Street on a July morning, so warm that a topper and patent-leather boots were a double torture, a doubly absurd concession to Fashion. And from St. James's Street to Savile Row; not to save the disputable shilling for a hansom and the chance of knocking out your front teeth if the cab-horse fell on his nose, but because he wanted to see the shops. After seven years in the wilderness they were an education in Imperial progress.

At the Geographical, however, he learnt that "dear old

Bates " was away, not very well, and the Librarian who received him instead was facetious, and not much interested in the Upper Niger. His own sphere had been Java. " Had Mr. Morpeth—oh, to be sure, *Morven*—ever been to Java? No? " A pity. But about papers now, next session. In November there was Joseph Thomson; in December Mc. Gillicuddy on the Reeks; in January—January? Oh yes! Sigsbee's Walk Across Tibet—no one believes he ever *did* walk across Tibet, but that's neither here nor there; and February? February was reserved for little Johnston, who might be back then from that mountain with the doose of a name—never *could* remember names! And beyond February —well, there we must wait to consult Old Bates. But if Mr. Morven had anything to say about the Niger—Upper, Middle or Lower—why could he not say it at the British Association meeting in September? " Bath, you know." " You could drink the waters at the same time." But really even *there*, they were rather full up in geography. There was Mrs. Paget Carstairs—dam' fine woman, couldn't get on with her husband, so went out to East Africa and blew off the steam. Toddled up to some other mountain where Johnston wasn't —at least, he says he never met her—showed herself in a ball dress and diamonds to a hoary old chief, old chief made a snatch at the diamonds; she floored him with a tent mallet and returned triumphantly. " Going to give us a jolly talk about it. Or there's the Honble. Anthony Piffle, who went up the Nile in a dahabeeah as far as he dared and got potted at by the Mahdists—or thinks he did." No doubt Eustace's little paper—for the Librarian hoped it would be short—*gräte* mistake say too much—could be fitted in. Eustace said he would consider these points: mentally—and quite unjustly—effacing the Royal Geographical Society from existence. Quite unjustly, but that was the typical ill-luck of the man. Had " dear old Bates " not been down with hay fever or a swollen artery he would have had a reception that would have made him a devoted Geographer for the rest of his days —and this Librarian I have sketched is quite an imaginary person; perhaps it was the Chief Clerk or the housekeeper's husband.

At any rate Eustace walked away from Savile Row southwards, still more enraged against the world of London. He longed to go to the Zoo and worship at the shrine of Lacrevy, the Prosector's Office, and the Dead House. But the Zoo contained at that moment young Tudell (quite unconscious of

his hatred, by the bye, and *dearly* wanting to meet him) whom he would not see till he could see him in his coffin. He strode with an angry face and a bristling moustache, feeling ridiculously brown and absurdly over-dressed, back into St. James's Street, and scowled at all the clubs, one after another. He did not belong to one ; yet one way and another he enjoyed for the moment an income of nearly £2,000 a year. He had never thought before he went out of joining any club. Well, there he was : rich enough to belong to any of 'em, but who would propose and second him ? He knew no one that he would stoop to ask a favour from. So he continued scowling at the old gentlemen in bow windows as he strode by ; and *they* took him for an Indian Civil Servant who had had a touch of the sun. Twelve o'clock at St. James's Palace. Where should he go ? Why not drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs ? Go and interview a publisher and have the idea of his great book trodden into the dust !

" Hansom ! " " Drive me to Munday, the publishers, Covent Garden." " What number, sir ? " " How the Hell do *I* know ? " (" Peppery sort of gentleman ! ") Cabby easily finds the house.

" Want to see Mr. Munday ? He's very busy. Whom shall I say ? " Eustace takes out an official card. Five minutes elapse. Then he is shown into a sanctuary of wood and glass, and a rather shaky old gentleman with red-rimmed eyes confronts him. Explanations. Moderate graciousness. " And you wanted to see me about——" " Well, about publishing a book on the Upper Niger." " Have you got the manuscript here ? " " No ; I've got to write it. It is all contained in letters and notes." " Ah, my dear young man, *I* should advise you to let it *stay* there. There is NO market just now for books on Africa, except of course Stanley's —or—or Mrs. Paget Carstairs—*remarkable* woman, that ! We are bringing out her book in the early autumn. She showed herself to a very powerful chief in *full ball dress and a tiara of diamonds* . . . persuasion, she thought, was better than force ; but he made *one* movement *and*——" " Yes," said Eustace, " I've just heard the story at the Geographical. But *mine* is a *serious* book ; the result of *at least* six years' study ; *hundreds* of sketches and drawings, materials for a map—vocabularies of languages, lists of birds, anthropology, folk-lore——" Eustace got fainter and fainter as he made this enumeration and as the features of the red-eyed old man expressed greater and greater despair. The latter at last

said, " *Quite* out of our line, I fear ; and *now* as I'm very busy. . . ."

Another piece of ill-luck ; for, a week afterwards, this old dodderer was forced by his sons to retire from active partnership. Either of them would have been only too glad to publish Eustace's book as an advertisement of their new interest in science and a bold venture into the realms of the serious. In fact, many years afterwards they did publish his great work on Ubunyanza.

Eustace, glaring more than ever, was in the Strand and saw across the way Sprintworth's celebrated chop house. It was world-famous ; he remembered as a youth at King's College he had always determined to lunch there, but was deterred by the excessively snubbing character of the head waiter who was constantly being quoted in Punch and described in the Cornhill. He would lunch at Sprintworth's on good old English fare—a steak from the grill, floury potatoes, Worcester sauce, and a foaming tankard of bitter ale.

The Head waiter of his youth had evidently gone to his rest. His *remplaçant* was a languid, baggy-eyed person in a spotted shirt front. He yawned as he led the way to a table which had a cloth, spotted like the shirt with old gravy. The order was taken, and the meal was a precious long time coming, while Eustace nourished further grievances against mankind. When it came : *bitter* disappointment and *lying* chroniclers ! The steak was large and flabby and apparently cut from an unwholesome buffalo with an odd flavour. The potatoes weren't floury but waxy ; the sauce—if really Worcester—was made from toadstools, the bitter ale was flat and poisonous. With a face of thunder, Eustace put down half-a-crown and stalked out, no man daring to stay him.

Having, after all, some sense of humour he burst out laughing when he reached the Embankment. " What shall I do now to kill time for an hour or so and then call at the C.O. ? " He dawdled about old King's College haunts, strolled through Covent Garden, walked up to the roof of the flower market and saw a collection of caged birds on sale " from the aviaries of Mrs. Rupert Smith "—whoever *she* might be—looked at the windows of other publishers and wondered whether they would be as discouraging as old Munday ; studied the announcements at theatres, and even—it was funny how the name stuck in his memory—passed on to the Alhambra to see what Miss Bella Delorme had been or would be playing in. The Alhambra

was closed and looked sulky, like the rest of Leicester Square (its renaissance was not yet achieved).

Miss Delorme and her Company were away touring in the provinces and would reopen in September with a Grand New Extravaganza, "Badrul-budour; or the Naughty Peri." *The Peri*—Miss Delorme: *Abanazar*—Mr. Wm. Strongbow.

Then a hansom to the C.O. The entrance with the famous leaden staircase; the never absent smell of New Canterbury mutton (nobody knew why); an Office Messenger who is very doubtful if he can see anybody; his own particular departmental official—Mr. Snodgrass—being away. An alert man in a smart frockcoat and generally smart and well-tailored appearance, waved flaxen hair and peremptory blue eyes, is passing, with despatch box under arm. He stops: "Whom does this gentleman want to see, Wilson?" "Well, I was just a tellin' 'im, sir, as Mr. Snodgrass——" Eustace, taking courage from the face confronting him, said: "My name is Morven; I've just been administering the Gambia, and——" "My *dear* fellow! To think they kept you hangin' about like this—You can go, Wilson—Come into my room. I think you called in once before and left a message saying you had——" "Yes. My mother died the very day I got home." "What *rough* luck! But I know all about you. I'm new to West Africa, so I've been reading up your reports, old and new—just spiffin'. Snodgrass, of course, is *your* man; but—well, you won't miss old Snoddy. I'm over him now, so you've come to the fountain head. Of course you must see Lord Knowsley, but he's out of town just now—Beastly hot, isn't it? But nothin' to what *you've* had, *I'll* be bound! Doin' anythin' to-night? Can't offer to take you to a play whilst you're in mourning, but you might come to the St. James's and dine with me there. I've taken a private room because I've got the great Burton coming, and his stories, as I dare say you know, are—But it shall be an An All Africa Night; in fact I'll tell you who's comin'. . . . It's a real stroke of luck gettin' *you*. Caps it all. Where are your diggin's, Hankeys? I know. B'long to any Club? Like to be put up for the Savile? All right; I'll fix it. Why, I've never told you my name! Arthur Broadmead—at your service. Assistant Under Secretary in charge of the West African and West Indian Departments, an awful swell I assure you! Well (handing him a scrawl on a yellow Memo paper) here it is: A. B., St. James's Club, Piccadilly, 7.30. To-night. Don't forget! It will be a red-letter day to Dick Burton,

meetin' you, fresh from the Niger ; and we'll get him to recite some of the best bits he's translatin' out of the Arabian nights. Ta Ta ! "

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Eustace walked back to Hankey's Mansions feeling quite different in his outlook on life. London was a jolly place after all ! To meet *Burton !*—a thing he'd only done in dreams. And now he didn't feel out of the picture. Half the spruce men he met were wearing patent leather boots, light grey spats, pale buff gloves, dark grey frockcoat-suit, and a curly-brimmed topper, just like himself. So his outfitter at the Stores *was* right.

CHAPTER XI

BELLA DELORME

A FEW days later, Eustace visited his mother's solicitor in the City, to settle such affairs with him, regarding his inheritance, as were necessary before Mr. Robinson went out of town with his family for the summer holiday at Littlehampton.

Robinson, of Brown, Jones, Robinson and Jones, was cousin to the Apostle Robinson, and a justly esteemed solicitor in an old-established firm. His City friends and clients understood there was something odd about his religion, but he never obtruded his faith in the Second Advent.

He was quietly observing Eustace all the time they were doing business. "Why don't you come and see us, next Sunday, for example? You know we live at Highbury—Rectory Lodge. Quite out in the country. The fresh air'll do you good. . . . Suppose you'll be going out of London soon yourself? Meantime come out and see how you like Highbury. I don't object to a game of tennis on a Sunday afternoon, especially if you've bin to church first. Come to the eleven o'clock at the Islington Church—we've not seen you there since ever so long, for you'd rather dropped off, years before you went to Africa—come to the eleven o'clock, ask the verger to show you your mother's seat—if you've forgotten it—and we'll drive you out to Highbury afterwards."

Eustace accepted.

He found his way that Sunday to the old Church he had known in his boyhood. It stood—four-square and ugly outside—in an enclosure of desolate trees which were on the down grade, surrounded by rusty railings and immured in paving stones. This open space, paved and railed, separated it from contact with the utterly ugly yellow-brick houses, formerly semi-fashionable residences—now tenements, offices, *loucheries*, pickle-manufactories and what not else—that had once grown up round some village green. But the exterior of the Church of the Second Advent though plain—I had said ugly—was well-kept. Inside, as you passed from the porch

or narthex, through swinging doors, it was a revelation. Islington seemed a thousand, fifteen hundred miles away. It was Byzantine. The clever architect—a great person in the world of architecture—who had taken in hand the original hideous Dissenting Chapel from which it had been developed, had, with much ingenuity and a wonderful sense of scenic effect, given you a Byzantine interior. There was not much mystery in the nave with its seats and gallery (once the organ loft) ; the colouring here was sombre yet with suggestions of gold and crimson, set off by the chess-board pavement of black and white. There were magnificent painted windows with Adventist themes from Revelation, designed by great Pre-Raphaelite artists of the 'sixties and 'seventies ; but the Chancel had screens, recesses, mysteries leading the eye to a gorgeous altar. The steps of the Chancel were of splendid marbles, inlaid ; the communion rails a magnificent piece of carving and scrolled iron. The mystery and indecision of the shrouded splendour was added to by the film of incense smoke which had remained from a preceding service. Perhaps the only jarring note, the only relic of Chapeldom was the long rows of substantial seats filling the nave : seats at the side and in the centre, divided by three aisles. Eustace longed to sweep all these away and substitute rush-bottomed chairs on the black and white pavement. But he saw now how the money of his mother and of the other well-to-do members had been spent, some of it ; for the church of his boyhood had been a much plainer and less interesting affair.

The service began with an introit on the organ, and a procession of choir boys and men, scarlet cassocked acolytes, deacons in black and white, priests of the different orders in appropriate and Byzantine vestments. Behind it walked alone the Episcop or Bishop of the church. The service—compounded from all the great liturgies of Christendom, flavoured with a special Adventist touch, and references to the surviving Apostolate—was intoned and gave the congregation little to do ; the anthems were as good as they might be at St. Paul's ; the homily, delivered by a young priest with a beautiful Italian face (who in everyday life was a dentist—and why not?), was ten minutes long and almost incomprehensible in its involved and Manichæan theology, but singularly comforting to those who did not understand it, from the musical tones and perfect diction of the preacher. The final Te Deum and voluntary were magnificent expositions of choral singing and organ playing. Although the character

of the service was not new to him, the details and accessories had so much developed in splendour and a certain Byzantine fixity and encrusted decorum that it came as a surprise. To find this in a sordid part of Islington, where if you passed out into the open air you smelt always Elizabeth Lazenby's pickles and sauces being boiled, six days out of the seven! No longer however were there alarming outbursts of prophecy, intruding themselves when least expected and making Church attendance actually dangerous to those who suffered from heart attacks. The blue-stoled prophet kept his contribution to a prescribed part of the service, delivered it in a reasonable tone of voice, and produced little but indisputable platitudes that were received tolerantly. No allusions were made to Antichrist whatever, and none to contemporaries who might be ripening for the rôle of the Beast. It was all just comfortably Byzantine; and even the beautifully executed frescoes on the lofty walls of saints and martyrs, angels and apostles coming with the Redeemer in his Second Advent were Byzantine in design and were in likeness counterparts of the clergy in the Chancel, choir and deacons' pews; except that they wore heavily-gilded haloes.

Eustace remained after the service, awaiting his host, who, as the principal Deacon, had duties to fulfil and vestments to change. Waiting also was a comely middle-aged lady. Her three pretty daughters had departed earlier.

Mr. Robinson came at last, gathered up Eustace and Mrs. Robinson, and they drove out to Rectory Lodge in a well-appointed brougham. The daughters had gone by omnibus.

Rectory Lodge was an eighteenth century country house with beautifully-kept gardens. There was an unexceptionable lunch served by trim parlourmaids and a page. After the meal and the coffee and a cigar for the men, they strolled out into the garden, and sure enough there was the lawn-tennis net and there were the girls reappearing in shorter skirts and tennis shoes and the two young sons in flannels and tennis shoes as well. They played tennis in moderation; they drank tea under a fine old hawthorn, and Eustace talked quite a lot with the Misses Robinson as he leant against a boundary hedge and looked across fields to Stoke Newington.

But what a change from the Adventists of his youth! Scarcely a mention of that Second Coming which had hung over most of them (when they analysed their inmost feelings) as a very disagreeable and upsetting possibility, making you uneasy about your investments and the pleasant stability of

day-to-day affairs. The only allusion in fact was from Ella Robinson, who in discussing the Islington Church said " Yes, it was wonderfully effective and they were really attached to it, and all that, but it would be so much nicer if it could be removed bodily to Westminster or Kensington and away from pickle and blacking factories and appalling boarding-houses." Though her father's cousin was a latter-day Apostle, she referred to him and the two other survivors of the original band as " dear old things, quite sweet-looking with their silvery hair, but *such* poor judges of localities." " Why should all our London Churches have been set up in such poky neighbourhoods ? "

Their father, fortunately, was much-broader minded than many Adventists of his day. He had for example no objection to theatre-going in moderation ; their brother Fred would shortly take up mining in Canada ; George would be articled to the firm after leaving Cambridge ; Lucy was studying medicine, wanted—did you *ever* hear the like, Mr. Morven ?—to be a *lady doctor*—ripples of laughter in which Lucy joined ; Ella was studying Art at South Kensington, and Phœbe—didn't quite know what she would be, knowing instinctively she would not remain long unwedded, though she had only left school a year. She was a pretty, shy, little thing, and listened so fascinated—like another Desdemona—to Eustace's stories of Africa, that he more than once thought——

But he didn't. Quite reluctantly he said good-bye to them late that evening, exchanging many promises to renew his visits when they were back from Sussex and he had returned from Scotland. But later on Bella Delorme came in the way, and many other things ; and when he next encountered the Robinsons in his pilgrimage through life, the three girls were all married, the boys had gone here and there and the old couple lived rather disconsolately in the big house which was now surrounded by ugly flats and villas, while beyond a stunted hedge and wire guard was not a landscape and the distant gardens of Stoke Newington, but a blank wall, a hundred feet in height, pierced by lavatory windows and beset with iron emergency stairs and hideous arteries of drainage pipes, blue and red, viscid and obscene.

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Imagine—for I really must hurry on in this chronicle—imagine Eustace paying a visit to his brother at Northampton ; imagine him cutting it as short as possible under the plea of urgent business at the C.O., when he realizes the blank staring

ugliness of his surroundings, the not-yet-banished atmosphere of whisky—for his brother must "break off by degrees"; the badly-cooked meals, for Mildred his sister-in-law has not yet had time to turn round and do better than employ a cook-general; the noisy, quarrelsome, hearty children, entirely without winsomeness; as their poor little hectic mother is without conversational charm. (She had had five children and three miscarriages in ten years; but in release from money cares, with a sobered, happier husband, and as a farmer's wife in the nicer parts of Warwickshire, where it really *is* country, she is going to grow strong, clear-eyed, and buxom—oh! blessed money! the all-healer.)

Imagine Eustace back in London, winding up that Islington sale: lots of money now in the Bank; preparing to go yachting and shooting in Scotland, whither he has been invited to join a party got up by one of Broadmead's friends at that "Burton" dinner. Imagine him taking out a gun licence and a licence to shoot game, sparing no expense in the choice of guns—a double-barrelled twelve-bore for grouse, and a choice rifle for the deer. Imagine him going to Wembley to try them and satisfy himself that his eye is not out; imagine the rapid journey north-west, in the Flying Glaswegian, driven by an elder brother of James Tudell, and the steam-boat taking him to Jura where his friend met him in a little yacht, and conveyed him and other guests across to a chilly castle, where however there were peacocks and fuchsias, and it never freezes in winter but is never dry or warm in summer.

Imagine his disgust at finding Scottish deer forests are only open moors interspersed with Irish bogs, whereon and whereby you can get so wet-footed and -limbed that no foot-gear or gaiters invented down to 1884 could keep you from catching cold. Imagine him stodging and squelching for hours over this rain-soaked moss and heather until they sight the deer; and then, with chattering teeth, making but a poor show as a shot—he who had brought down the Nigerian Giraffe and the Derbian Eland: imagine the furious headache that comes after sipping raw "whuskey" from Donald's flask, and the gathering doubts in his mind as to whether the Highlands come up to William Black's descriptions. Imagine the dreary waits behind butts for the grouse to fly over; the yachting in a thirty-ton yawl (or whatever the beastly little boat was called) and the hospitable, colossally rich host having—damn it all—forgotten all about the commissariat, and the gillie-steward having thought that lobsters—they had a

lobster fishery—and "whuskey," ship's biscuit, and tea was all he need lay in for a four days' cruise. Imagine the weather in later August being more than commonly fiendish and of an order never alluded to in Railway advertisements; and imagine Eustace at last being put to bed in a high fever—the result of eight successive chills-to-the-bone, in a sumptuous bedroom with a roaring fire (at last !); tended by the dearest old housekeeper of the Rouncewell breed, whose memories went back to the grandfather of the present laird.

And again, imagine him restored to health, with profuse thanks for a *most pleasant* visit, taking boat and train south again, thanking God as he drew nearer and nearer to what remained of an English summer: imagine him in recovered exuberance not stopping in London longer than to repack his portmanteau; and then ticketed by Cook, crossing the Channel, revelling in the warmth of Paris, gloating over the history packed into Versailles, sunning himself at Fontainebleau, stuffing himself with good things at Dijon, at the very hotel where his uncle James forty years before had that horrid rebuff; then erratically wandering zig-zag over south-central, south-east France, in quest of this new romance, the prehistory of Man; these wonderful cave discoveries which were then distracting scientific France from the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, "La Femme psychologique," "Les maladies de la Vessie, etc." (these were Eustace's surface impressions). Imagine him in the Pyrenees—botanizing—and in Spain—and in Portugal. . . . Oh what rapture for an eye like his and a mind not sterilized in Public Schools ! And the health-giving voyage from Lisbon to Plymouth over a genially boisterous Bay—a little lingering in the exquisite autumnal loveliness of Cornwall with Stanhope Forbes for guide—a long coach-drive through North Devon—the Mendips, in order to see something of English cave-men and the Sabre-tooth tiger (all these ideas put into his head by Boyd Dawkins whom he had met at Broadmead's dinner). And London at last, and Hankey's Mansions looking down on a St. James's Park seared by a London autumn !

Work is being resumed everywhere. There are many conferences at Colonial Office and Foreign Office over the conclusions of the Berlin Conference, over the outrageous colonial ambitions of Germany, the rapacity of France and the pretensions of Portugal. Eustace, through Broadmead—not Snodgrass or Bennet Molyneux—they both instinctively dislike him—is drawn into these discussions as a specialist (a

thing which would never occur nowadays). He sees the great men of the day; Lord Algernon Verisopht (Parliamentary Under Secretary at the F.O. and a guileless person) even says, "*You must see the Cabinet,*" only he doesn't; but he sees Lord Knowsley, at the C.O. And here he receives a douche that is perhaps good for him (for he was at that time not quite certain whether he would be an Ambassador or Viceroy of India—you were generally troubled by this choice when you had left Lord Algie Verisopht's room: he was so easily enthusiastic over every *Cygnoides anserinus* whom he met). Lord Knowsley who had a terribly massive and impassive face and manner and yet a weak digestion, "saw nothing in the Niger; very unhealthy, I'm told. Lord-ah-Branville—ah-thinks differently, so we are probably turning you over to him. You—will—ah—hear more about this presently; meantime"—a pumping handshake impels him towards the colossal door of the apartment—"very pleased to have met you; *hope* your health will—ah—be fully restored. My father believed very much in Cassia water in such cases"—*ti-i-ng.* "Wilson! Ask Mr. *Broadmead* to step this way—*Good* bye, Mr.—ah—Morden."

"Yes," said Broadmead afterwards, "the F.O. is goin' to take you over for a while to clear up this Niger job. P'raps you may come back to us. I shan't lose sight of you, you may bet your boots. And you can come in and see me here whenever you like. Meantime, come and dine with me at the Garrick next Sunday—oh no! I'm goin' down to Hawarden for the Sunday—well then, next Wednesday—and we'll have larks. Don't forget!"

Arthur Broadmead—that brilliant meteor, whose passage through the Colonial Office made it at last interesting and interested, was said to have been the result of a union between a Mr. Broadwood (afterwards Lord Clavecin) and a Miss Brinsmead; which, if true, accounted for his perfect touch and gift of harmony: Arthur Broadmead, who came, no one knew whence, via Oxford, where he took Double Firsts and the Newdigate Prize, and was imported into the F.O. as Somebody's Private Secretary, and who was actually an Assistant Under Secretary in the Colonial Office at 32 (not even Snodgrass being jealous, he was so all-compelling); Arthur Broadmead, who ran away at twenty with the Honble. Mrs. Bellamy, and then ran back with her when he heard that old Bellamy felt it dreadfully—and nobody was a penny the worse; Broadmead who was known to have had eight mis-

tresses in high life in succession, whom he treated with the greatest chivalry and all of whom in succession died *quite* old, *quite* understanding, *quite* consoled, and *quite* unsuspected ; Arthur, who fenced like Count Boni de Castellane, who changed the policy of Secretaries of State, who made Queen Victoria laugh with his quaint stories when he went down to Balmoral with despatches, who readily said a kind word to a stage-manager for some poor chorus girl, which got her a front place (and that enabled her to marry a stockbroker and leave the stage) ; Arthur, who drove a team of zebras down to Walter Rothschild's, and thereby procured the edict protecting the zebra in British Bechuanaland, who was the first to ride a safety bicycle from Chapelmead to London on a Sunday when Lord Wiltshire couldn't trust the telegraph wires ; who taught them Club Croquet at Highbury, who made Ping-pong popular at Osborne, and introduced Bridge to Sandringham ; who lost five thousand pounds at Monte Carlo baccarat and won seven thousand at Monte Carlo roulette, and subscribed the balance to the Cyprus Exploration Fund, and donated those exquisite Tanagras to the British Museum ; who died at forty-three from heart failure and overwork, because the Jacobszoon raid into the Transvaal had temporarily wrecked his plans for the British Empire in Africa : Arthur Broadmead introduced Eustace Morven to Bella Delorme. Rather an anti-climax, but what then ? Why, Bella, who was temporarily " out " with her husband (her third husband, William Strangeways) fell in love with him, absolutely, fascinated by his dark eyes, grave looks, thick moustache, charming smile—when he did smile—and courtly way of saying *Miss* Delorme—never Bella till they were lovers.

And persuaded him with little difficulty, though she was ten years older, and didn't look it in the least, to run away with her for a week to Brighton (she was going to play at the Brighton theatre) while her husband went to Eastbourne—he was acting at the Devonshire Theatre—with *his* lady-love-and-leading-lady. (It was episodic alternatives like these that kept them such an attached couple till Bella was past the dangerous age and her husband reduced to retirement and pansy cultivation at Twickenham owing to a threatening of phlebitis.)

If you asked me why Arthur did this—because he almost put them in each other's arms—I should say that he was beginning to find Eustace just a teeny weeny bit of a bore (though he would never have said this to his greatest intimate ;

he *hated* saying unkind things). But he wanted to devote all his attention for a bit to the reconciliation of German-British-French colonial ambitions : Eustace was so one-ideaed about the Niger and Native rights—wanted us to protect all sorts of strange peoples, and yet not interfere with their home-trade, their slave-trade, or cannibalism—not, in fact, to remove the *pâtine* of Africa. He admired so frankly and touchingly Broadmead's many gifts—and it rather gets on your nerves to have a friend constantly sitting on your office table, with one leg dangling, looking at you with dog's eyes and saying, "Well, you *are* a wonderful chap ! . . ." Of course he was wonderful—so much so, that he felt an uncanny conviction he would not long survive forty. The good fairies had given him all their gifts : the bad fairy must have put several nasty packages into the corbeille—not only the odd circumstances connected with his birth, and Jacobszoon's foolish venture, but—but—something else—one love affair that went *quite, quite wrong.*

Then again he thought Eustace in some things a genius, a splendid tool for his empire-building, but just a little bit of an ass—as every man was (in Arthur's opinion) before his first *affaire,* at eighteen or thirty-four. It would do Yusy-goosy no harm to have a run with Bella—quite a decent sort as they go—and Bill Strongbow wouldn't mind, bless you !

So he began to repeat things to Bella which Eustace had never said, and things to Eustace which Bella had frankly admitted ; and thus in the genial last weeks of a particularly sunny November, they were very comfortably established at the Hotel Bargepole, Brighton, in a suite of rooms, with balconies facing the sea.

* * * * *

Bella Delorme first impressed the *jeunesse dorée* of London in 1866, when she played the principal rôle in a Gaiety burlesque (? Cinderella). She was twenty-six then, and already married to her first husband, extraordinarily pretty in a common, golden-haired, blue-eyed, pink-cheeked way, rather like an unusually vivid doll which has got blood in its veins instead of sawdust. There was, however, just *something* about her when she was angry or much in love or had had a drop too much champagne, which was singularly endearing. The bright blue of the dancing eyes grew dark and stormy by the enlargement of the pupil ; the yellow-brown, well-furnished eyebrows drew together and gave her a look like an intent or angry child. Her hair was so abundant, glossy, wavy, and

naturally golden that in her twentieth year she gained good money by posing in the window of a hairdresser's shop to sell his hair-restorer—till she put out her tongue and screamed through the glass very low remarks to an impudent admirer—and the Police—always partial to Bella and she to them—intervened and advised the hairdresser that he'd better find some other lady to advertise his bloomin' lotion or 'e'd 'ave 'is winder bruk, and *they* wouldn't interfere. He replied that he was a ratepayer, etc., etc., and . . . She was about five feet five, which in a plump woman can look splendid when high heels are added and the stature is drawn to its full height, as an injured queen, an insulted abbess ; and yet is not *too* tall to quench the appeal to the protective instinct in man which is so soon followed by the amatory. At twenty-six she was known as Mrs. Sid Collins in private life. Her real " maiden " name was Toodle, as her father caused people to spell it (though she thought herself it was really Tewdale, in former times, " when her grandparents lived in Arfordshire "). Her father was an honest engine-driver on the North Western who died when she was only three years old, in a terrible railway accident ; leaving his good wife Polly to bring up what was not already out of the world of a family of ten.

Bella as a child danced to the playing of street organs and sang shrill treble songs—not always very decorous—that she composed herself. It was not many weeks after a music hall song had made a hit that she sang a perversion of it, up and down the Marylebone court where they lived.

Her brothers were all more or less stalwart and good-looking ; and no more remarkable for their stern morality than were most artisans of that day. But though Polly Toodle, their mother, was indulgent to the " goings-on " of the male, she had a most rigid etiquette and code for the female ; and there is no doubt that anxiety about Bella hastened her end, though thrombosis was quoted as the determining factor.[1]

Having " charred " for some years after Toodle's death, she had the entrée to many good houses in the West, and this got Bella a place as under housemaid in Hyde Park Gardens when she was only seventeen. She was then—there is no doubt—*very* pretty. With laughs that were too loud and hearty smacks in the face she easily kept off the butler's attentions ;

[1] It was not due to hardships in later life, because Florence found her out eventually and made her a gradually increasing allowance, for old sake's sake : she had been wet-nurse to Florence's brother, little Paul Dombey II, in 1831.—H. H. J.

but fell a victim to the first love of the eldest son, an Eton boy. " 'E took advantage of me," she said, quite truthfully, " I couldn' bear to see 'im a cryin', and 'e so good lookin' with 'is curly 'ed." The housekeeper soon found out, told the mistress and Polly was sent for. Bella departed laughing and bore no one any malice.

Then she boldly offered herself as a pupil at a Stage-dancing Academy in Montagu Street (there are forty-three streets of this name in London, so you can take your choice) and paid for her lessons and her keep by surrendering her charms to the middle-aged dancing master, who also recruited models for thoroughly reputable sculptors in St. John's Wood, to whom Bella " sat " or " posed " many times ; until, seized by an unaccountable whim, she went off with a French Polisher of vigorous muscles (who posed for Apostles and Jewish law-givers in his off times to Bible illustrators). She just met him in Regent's Park. He said, " Like to see the Zoo ? " It was a sixpenny day, and before they had finished the round they had agreed to faire menage ensemble, over a cup of tea and two buns. His name was Delorme. I forget why they didn't marry or what became of Delorme. Bella was always reticent on the subject ; but she was very fond of him in her *passagère* fashion, and took his name when she really became an established feature at the Marylebone Music Hall and the Philharmonic.

Sid Collins seems to have been a stage carpenter or mechanician, who fell down a trap of his own devising and broke his back, when Bella was twenty-seven. She had married him ostensibly for a spree, because she thought it would be such fun to get married at a Registry Office, quite a novelty then in Marylebone ; but in reality because he had taken a great fancy to her baby by Delorme, a beautiful child whom she sometimes brought with her to rehearsals. She thought steady, middle-aged Sid Collins would keep a good home for the child in her own rather rackety life.

Somewhere about 1868 Charles Dickens went to see her at the Philharmonic and was delighted to trace her back to his own creation, Toodle the Engine Driver. I think it was in *La Fille de Madame Angot* or *Géneviève de Brabant* that she really drew the West End to the Philharmonic at Islington, but it is very difficult to be accurate on these points now. John Hollingshead saw her at the Philharmonic and secured her for the Gaiety as his leading lady in Burlesque.

She was not good in " principal boy " parts, hated dressing

up even remotely as a man or boy ; but as a female character she was simply irresistible. Few so completely fulfilled the idea of the eternal feminine. After she made her *début* as Cinderella (to Nellie Farren's Prince) all the London I have defined raved about her (it never took much to make them do this). But in her case I think it must have been justified (I was only eight years old at the time, so naturally my opinion is given at second-hand). Of course her Cinderella was *preposterous*. She looked so big and bonny on the stage that they had to put into the two Ugly Sisters' parts men of six feet. You felt her sitting over the ashes was an impudent pose, and Nellie Farren looked *rather* a shrimp as the Prince. Arthur Roberts was the Fairy Godmother, and when they exchanged badinage over the sham coals ! the audience laughed till they ached and even broke blood vessels (they say).

My remembrance of her begins in 1876, when I was taken to see her by an uncle from British Columbia. She had a wonderful memory and seldom disappointed managers by not knowing her parts. Her voice in singing was not always true, though whether trained or not it had a very sweet *timbre* when she grew sentimental (of course, in much later years it was brassy and painful). But both in singing and in speaking she had the drollest way of forgetting herself, of going back for a minute, for a flash, for a phrase to the cockney accent of the streets or to a flatness of voice-register that made you writhe with a sense of the ludicrous. On such occasions she would always pause and look down at the conductor ! (a *very very* old trick, now, which is carefully taught to débutantes in *Revues*) then recall herself and sing like a bird. These slips were never in the book. Sometimes, no doubt, they were due to boredom, but more often to a desire to caricature the false sentiment of the piece.

In her double life, on and off the stage, it was the same. Chez elle, with intimates, she spoke as a cockney maiden speaks and was not too choice in her adjectives and adverbs—or even nouns. On the stage she could play—she really *could* play—superbly, any rôle you liked to give her, and deliver her Shakespeare or her Wills with the conventionally right accent and pronunciation. *Only* she was a dangerous impersonator of the classic drama or the melodrama of the 'seventies and 'eighties ; *because*—as I say—*if* the part bored her or struck her suddenly as " bally rot," she would give that subtle inflection of the voice or quality to the vowel or uncertainty to the aspirate which would produce a roar of laughter from

the gallery boys and ruin the piece. Therefore it was seldom that she appeared in anything but burlesque or beauty shows, until increasing age and Diana Dombey's influence had sobered her.

Of course, also, she had a temper—easily roused, easily appeased; and when angered she said and did things that could not be palliated. My uncle (from British Columbia) once told me that he went to see Bella as the Grande Duchesse at the Alhambra in the late 'seventies. She, of course, *was* La Grande Duchesse, Ruth Delancey was Wanda, and William Strongbow was Fritz. The piece had been running some time and every one, except the gallery claque (and Bella herself), had got very tired of the strident "Voi*ci* le *Sa*bre, le *Sa*bre, le *Sa*bre, etc." Bella was *énervée* that night because William, to whom she had only been married three years, was already rather inclined to run after Ruth. William being big and blond was naturally rather drawn at times to small, neat, dark-haired women. Well, there was some sort of reflector on the Stage, and in this, when the claque yelled "Encore," Bella saw the profile of Ruth in the act of exhibiting to the audience a *tiny, tiny* yawn. It was enough. She strode towards her with cheeks that blazed even under the paint, and blue eyes like scintillating sapphires, and delivered a box on the ear under which Wanda collapsed. The audience was silent in consternation; but the manager, a man of ready wit, *at once* lowered the curtain (the song comes near the end of the Act) and said *nothing*; I mean, offered *no* explanation.

The curtain down, Bella regained her temper and knelt sobbing by the fainting Wanda. They quickly forgave each other. Sal volatile and a little brandy did the rest; tears were wiped away, hare's foot and powder puff applied. The great curtain was drawn aside, and before the drop scene the two walked on, arms interlaced, tearfully smiling—Applause which injured the ceiling followed. The piece ran a hundred nights longer, right on into the autumn.[1]

W. S. Gilbert had celebrated her charms in one of the earliest Bab Ballads in Fun—I only remember the first verse.

> Oh, beautiful Bella Delorme,
> She has taken all London by storm;
> She has stolen my heart and denies me a part
> Of her own, which is not very warm.

It was in his earlier manner and is not to be found in the Standard Collection of his Verse.

[1] See the *Era*, July and November 1878.

She bore him no malice though the other verses bantered her, rather roughly. She would have loved to play a part in one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. But her voice at the time she ran away to Brighton with Eustace had become decidedly too "Gaiety," a fact which Sullivan broke to her with his customary tact. However Gilbert, touched by her admiration of his plays, wrote her up as a Fairy Queen in a Drury Lane Pantomime, with Arthur Roberts as the Demon; and *that*—ah me! we oldsters shall never laugh again as we laughed then. Fortunately I can speak *de visu et de auditu*, and not on an uncle's testimony.

I have mentioned already that she had a daughter, who went by the name of Edith Delorme—for the good reason that Delorme, the French polisher, was her father. She hardly enters this story, and indeed is only referred to as one of the most estimable of public women, stateswomen, living exemplars of the foolishness of having so long withheld the vote from her sex. I have gathered, that from very early times, after Sid Collins's death, Edith was brought up by her Aunt Jemima, went early to an excellent Board school in North Paddington; and then—much later, as her mother grew rich, passed on to Bedford College and Girton, and really saw very little of her mother till she was quite grown up and the mother's life tout-à-fait réglée. They then lived together for a time at Twickenham (where her step-father cultivated pansies); and one day, Edith, after having written a most remarkable Essay on the *Dietetics of the Poor* for the *Quarterly Review*, married a sub-editor of a great daily, and is just as happy as ever she could be—or was before August 1914.[1]

Therefore now you know all, and perhaps more than is necessary, about Bella Strangeways, up to the time when she went to Brighton with Eustace and had rooms overlooking the sea in the second floor suites of the Hotel Bargepole. She taught Eustace much he had never found in books, and in turn learnt from him a good deal which made her a better woman. But she put out of his head any idea of renewing his acquaintance with pretty little Phœbe Robinson, who would have made him a sweet little wife and a happy father, and perhaps have given to his life an entirely different and—maybe—a more successful turn.

[1] She was nearly elected M.P. for South Hampstead, December 1918.—H. H.

CHAPTER XII

THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN THE 'EIGHTIES.

THE Foreign Office in the 'eighties and 'nineties may not have been, like the Board of Trade, a nest of singing birds, but it was the meeting place of a remarkable body of men, especially in its heads of department and senior clerks. The Seniors whom Eustace got to know, and in one or two cases very sincerely to admire, were sound scholars, agreeable men of the world, kindly, upright gentlemen, not easily bested even in remote branches of learning or in geography outside the beaten track of the public schools. Who that knew Sir Edward Hertslet did not respect his exceptional, almost encyclopædic knowledge of Treaties and of the history of Europe, Africa, Asia, and America since the sixteenth century? Or fail to find the readiest help in research of all kinds at his hands? Before him there had been Norris, the scholar in African linguistics, whose views on the relationships of African tongues and on phonetics, were wonderfully advanced for the time of his writing and helpful to those who came after him. From no one more than Hertslet, his successor and—in knowledge—his legatee did Morven and myself meet with greater encouragement to pursue our studies of African speech; and to my library of reference on this subject Sir Edward contributed the first volumes, then unpurchasable anywhere.

Then there was the Chief Clerk, who should have sat to a great painter for an ideal type of benevolent Patriarch. The Chief Clerk in those days did not exist to worry, when you were down with fever, with query papers that were totally unnecessary, very puzzling and really applied to your predecessor; but he was a veritable father to everybody within the Foreign Office list; from some trembling little Vice-Consul, uncertain as to his allowances, or some great Ambassador who had vicariously blundered in stating his travelling expenses at twice the right total. There are many reasons why I must fuse the types and confuse the names; but as regards these one-time and long-time Librarians and this age-long Chief Clerk they have so passed into history that it is allowable to

refer to them *sans ambages* or under the thinnest veil of fiction.

For the purposes of my story, however, I may assume that—besides the too laudatory Lord Algernon Verisopht, who, as what Susan Knipper, mother of Susan Knipper-Totes, would have called " a Temp'ry as opposed to a Permanency," was the spoilt child of the F.O. and allowed to write and say what he pleased : besides Lord Algy, the great men with whom Eustace came most into contact were Beauregard Lansdell, Sir Mulberry Hawk, the Honble. Fred Thrumball, and Mr.—afterwards Sir—Bennet Molyneux.

Lansdell—I think he had not been knighted then, he was at any rate Sir Beauregard a little later—might, in appearance, have been a brother of Lord Leighton. He painted flowers and interiors quite as well as Alfred Parsons and Mr. Orpen ; he spoke eight languages, including Persian, and played the French horn extremely well. (His wife was a magnificent accompanist, and together they made delicious music at their house in Brinsley Gardens—the large house at the corner, by Prince's Gate.) Sir Mulberry Hawk was the dearest old dear and the best whist-player that ever refused to play for money. Why this trait ? Because he was a very distant connection of a dreadful Sir Mulberry Hawk in late Regency times, who was a gambler and roué and killed a great uncle of *our* Lord Algy Verisopht in a duel on the sands near Boulogne. They had quarrelled, ostensibly over cards, but some said there was a woman in the case. However that might be, the wicked Sir Mulberry deservedly died in great penury at Florence, and the Grand Duke of that time being a fanatical Roman Catholic refused him Christian burial anywhere in the Tuscan dominions. There was a devil of a fuss about it, and all the documents used to be in the book-case of the Private Secretary's waiting room ; and often when you called (and had to wait) to know whether you were going to be made a Consul General, an Ambassador or a Chargé d'Affaires, you had the opportunity of reading all about it, and appreciating the real reasons that justified Palmerston's favouring a United Italy.

Dear Old Sir Mulberry was commonly known in Eustace's day as " Giglamps." Why ? Because when he first entered the F.O. in 1860 they were still in a stage of 1840 wit. In 1840 there was a vehicle called a gig. And this gig, because it was " damned dangerous," had very large lamps. Therefore in 1840 if you met a person you knew wearing very large spectacles, you said " Hullo ! Giglamps," and then laughed. Now our Sir Mulberry, who had, in a most tortuous way (so

that he came of the nicest stock himself), inherited the baronetcy from this wicked second cousin, *never* played whist, short or long, for money, lest he might be led into violent courses. Meantime, to finish my allusions to his nickname—a name you *had* to call him by, directly you held the Queen's Commission as "*de la carrière*" (or every one took you for an outsider or an Honorary Attaché), Sir Mulberry, even in 1860 wore very large spectacles, tortoiseshell-rimmed, delightful things, covering the whole angle of vision. Now you see?

But Sir Mulberry Hawk, though he might be short-sighted, was exceedingly able. He was in some ways the wisest man we have had in the Foreign Office, certainly not excepting Lord Hammond, who couldn't see the Franco-Prussian war coming till the telegram announcing its Declaration was thrust under his nose; whereas if we had had Sir Mulberry still there, in 1913–1914—but never mind—I can't bear to think of the might-have-beens, with our happiness, our futures lost or jeopardized on the blood-stained fields of battle.

The Honble. Fred Thrumball had the handsome face, the curly hair, the physique and expletives of a guardsman, but was steeped in the milk of human kindness, and had an intelligence so shrewd that no Russian Ambassador or Turkish either, no German Councillor of Embassy with the rank of Minister could get past him. A man who has written his name very deeply into the older and wiser aspects of our Foreign Policy.

And there was Bennet Molyneux. Bennet Molyneux was there, of course, through the Feenix influence.[1] Also he had married the daughter of Sir Emilius Gradgrind of the Treasury. Consequently he was well entrenched in the public service. His private life was blameless, and his wife and daughters saw no flaw in him; but he was an object of dislike to his seniors at the F.O.; less so to the juniors for a variety of reasons—partly because he gave good dinners and was the deadly foe of all "outsiders." If he had had his way no one who had not received a Secretary of State's nomination and submitted themselves to an old-fashioned Civil Service examination should have passed the Foreign Office portals. He would have applied this rule to the very charwomen who cleaned out the majestic building and the housekeeper who purveyed its tasty lunches. He it was that opposed so bitterly the introduction

[1] He was the son of the Hon. and Revd. Arthur Molyneux, and a great-grandson of the 3rd Lord Feenix.

of female typists, who for a time had to be immured in a tower to protect them from his wrath.

Every new proposal was to him anathema. He spoke just enough bad French to have passed a very perfunctory examination in the 'sixties. More knowledge than that of foreign tongues he condemned as unnecessary and even ungentlemanly. You employed dragomen and servile interpreters to do that sort of thing, and kicked them out of your office when they had done it. He thoroughly approved of the Turkish treatment of the Armenian and "saw nothin' to fuss about" in the Congo atrocities. Leopold had once given him a dam' good cigar. He hated music as a dam' disagreeable noise; in painting only approved of family portraits, battlepieces, and still life; thought Science not a profession for gentlemen; but esteemed *riding* and especially fox-hunting to be the mind-occupancy for men of the right sort.

He always resembled—Thrumball used to say—"my aunt's coachman, and is equally obstinate." Except that he wore an eyeglass which is not usual in that career, he looked like a rather stubborn, solemn, cynical coachman, and in his everyday dress wore a turnover tie and a horseshoe pin. I believe he *did* ride in the Row occasionally; but when I went to pass a week-end with him in Wiltshire, I remember his peaches, well; I remember his game of billiards (very good); I remember his whist and its threepenny points, and that he had a canary to which he was much attached, and some remarkable Spangled Hamburgs; also, his very strong cigars (which I never touched): but long afterwards it occurred to me I hadn't seen the ghost of a horse. Even the one that drew the fly from and to the station seemed to be hired.

And when in return he paid us a visit in North Africa, and anxious to show him *I* could ride—for he had a most offensive assumption about him that no one he conversed with could do so, not even Thrumball, who in those far back days when Egypt and Lord Branville got on his nerves was wont to repair to the ancestral Berkshire and ride down the Master of the hunt, leap anything, and stand beside the dying fox long before the first hound came up—well, when I took Bennet Molyneux out with me on the Sidi Tabet plains and a jackal got up and the two splendid barbs with us on their backs, and my Arab sais behind, went after him "hell for leather"; Bennet Molyneux—to my immeasurable surprise—first shouted "This is dam' foolery" and then—fell off! When he recovered himself—he wasn't badly stunned—he said it was dam'

manslaughter ; he hadn't come out to inspect Consular accounts and get his neck broke at the same time. Of course I agreed he hadn't, and the incident was closed.

Yet if you chanced to be in the Park on a Monday morning and he was there too, he would point out all the horses that were spavined ; and, if you were a junior like I was, you had to declare *you* thought them spavined too ; so much so, that he was always called—till he became an Under Secretary —" Old Spavins." Peace to his ashes, if one can really write that with appropriateness, seeing that he was drowned in the Lake of Geneva. *Of course* he had his good side : everybody has. He was extraordinarily charitable. He once helped me out of a hole—quite a small hole, a mere depression in the soil ; still I was in a difficulty : and when I tried to thank him he merely thumped me on the back and said, " No dam' thanks, please ; come and lunch at Ranelagh, and we'll see the polo. Thrumball's son plays a good game."

Still, as I say, he was not liked by his Senior colleagues. And as they couldn't get him moved to another office and he wouldn't take a post abroad, they were constantly sending him off on distant, futile, and sometimes dangerous errands, to inspect something or haul somebody over the coals. But it was with him as with an aunt of mine, who was much contemned by other middle-aged female relations, who would say of her in plaintive tones, when she successively survived fire and sword, plague, famine and pestilence in India, " *Nothing* will kill your Aunt Jane ! " So no harm befell Bennet Molyneux, no stab from a maddened consul, no typhoid from an Eastern well, no Yellow Jack in Brazil, no bronchitis from the Triestine Bora. When he did die, not long ago, from the upsetting of a boat, mid-way across the Lake of Geneva, it was after his retirement, when he had become an Alpine climber. Something wrong with his knee-cap had checked any further riding, but did not prevent his ascent of the Matterhorn.

When Eustace was introduced to the F.O. in 1884, and Lord Algernon Verisopht predicted for him a great future, Molyneux on the ot her hand conceived an intense dislike to him as an Outsider, and strongly opposed his being employed in Bornu or anywhere else, or our having any Niger policy at all. However, in December, 1884, Mr. Bennet Molyneux was requested by the Sec. of State to proceed to Monte Carlo and inspect the prisons there, the British Vice-Consul having complained of their sanitation ; and Sir Mulberry Hawk

ventured to add to His Lordship's memo (for approval) the additional words "Yes: and then go on to Spezia and Leghorn, and overhaul the Consular accounts."

* * * * *

Eustace was one of those cases just then of the typical "mother's own boy" that, when he does go wrong goes wrong a long way. Even Broadmead, not a moralist, thought he was overdoin' it. Not content with the little outing at Brighton, he was now (January, 1885) at Monte Carlo with Bella, William Strongbow, and a very disreputable journalist, Baxendale Strangeways (of whom, more anon). The fact was, Eustace had returned from Brighton, had worked very hard at the F.O., and Royal Geographical, and had avoided Bella and the Alhambra background as much as possible. Not out of pique with Bella—far from it—but because he imagined that if William found out or rather was made publicly aware of his relations with his wife, there would be a scene, some horrible vulgar bout of fisticuffs, which would get into the papers and wreck his career. He was relieved of all apprehension on this score by running up against William one night at the Savage Club, and being patted approvingly on the back and asked why he didn't come and see poor little Bella who was cryin' her eyes out, unconscious of having given offence. So Eustace had said to himself: "Oh *well*, if it comes to *that!* No good in being more royalist than the king," and had taken part in several *soupers fous*, with Arthur Broadmead in the chair; and finally proposed to Bella that, as he had a few weeks in which to amuse himself before starting for Africa, they might run over to Paris for a fortnight. She was not acting till the spring, when she came out in Shakespeare; indeed they were by this time quite well off and hinting at retirement.

Bella received his proposal with delight, but insisted that William and Ruth Delancey should come too—"They won't get in our way, and it'll *look* better." On Bella's proposition, she and Eustace stood treat and shared expenses. Ruth, of course, had very little spare money: Bella knew that she had once taught in a school and had to support an invalid mother—there had been a bad brother who had defaulted at a bank and run away. Ruth was a pretty little thing, who looked rather sad and was hopelessly in love with William, who had been very protective at the theatres where they acted. Bella, at first violently jealous, realized it was only one of William's many amourettes, and quite the most respectable. She shut

her eyes and ears, therefore, after her pagan fashion ; and even made the business look as unlikely as possible by going about with them. Besides Ruth had a cough (she died three years afterwards from phthisis), and a few weeks away in the South might do her good.

" Who was William, before he became an actor ? Is he really your husband ? " asked Eustace, as they strolled through the rooms at Versailles. Bella was a little dazed with the splendours and the tremendous history of the place. They sat and rested on a plump, crimson velvet bench. There were scarcely any other visitors, so her conversation in rather loud tones did not matter. (Bill and Ruth had gone on some other excursion.)

" Bill ? " replied Bella, " *Of course* 'e's me 'usband. We were married at Southampton in 1872. 'E was only twenty-two then, and as fine a young feller as you could wish to see. 'E's about your age, I should guess, a good ten years younger nor what I am—. Oh, I'm not one to lie about me age. A woman's no older than what she looks, and those artists—sculptors, I mean—'d still like to 'ave me as their model—Why it wasn't s'long ago as a real R.A. came and ast me to pose for—I forget—'e says it meant Venus of the People—shameless 'ussy any way. Well, it didn't take more than a 'our or two of me afternoons, and I'm nothin' if not good-natured ; 'sides I wanted 'im to send me a Private View invite, which 'e did ; and I went also—I and Bill—to their Evenin' Party in July. Such larks ! I took Bill's arm and went round the galleries lookin' at the pictures through one of them tortoiseshell spectacles on a long stalk—what d'yer call 'em ? Those things the Marchioness looks out of when she wants to down pore Esther in *Caste*—looked just as though I thought small beer of modern art. William was in fits ; but this 'ere R.A. 'e comes up and says, ' The President's a lookin' at yer. Don't overdo it, 'cos you're my guest.' I says ' Alright 'ole cock, I'm on me best be'avyure to-night ' —'Owever I was sayin' I sat for 'im for the 'ole figure—leastways me arms and bust and tummy—I was supposed to be 'oldin' a mirror, an' I'd got a sheet wound round me legs. An' there was 'is ole gal come as reglar as clock-work, an' knitted a counterpane and afterwards made tea for us—as nice as nice can be, but she wasn't goin' to trust *'er* ole man, not five minutes out of 'er sight. Well : *that* was only three years ago, and I ain't got no stouter since or changed me corsets—so *that* shows you I don't look me age nor shan't

yet, till I'm turned fifty ; and *then* I mean to retire from the stage an' settle down at Twickenham—Lor. We *'ave* got a nice little place there, I *can* assure you, an' Bill, 'e's that *fond* o' gardenin'—reglar *serious* about it. I shan't ast *you* down there, Yusy, leastways not for no larks. My daughter's comin' back from 'er college to live at 'ome with William an' me. She thinks a lot of us, an' a better girl don't live. She's packed full of science, and *so* pretty, an' never throws me accent in me teeth, though when I'm with *'er* I try to talk like I do on the stage in serious parts. She ain't seen me in the others, nor I don't want 'er to. You know what the Boys are—the Gaiety Boys—They *will* 'ave it. I 'as to say a saucy thing now and again ; an' if Arthur comes . . . well ! I can't *'old* meself in. *Larf ?* You think *you* larf loud enough at 'im in front. I can tell you I ain't mistress of meself when 'e's on the stage, though at first I can give 'im what 'e calls 'is *quid pro quo.*

" But about William. 'E was a young perliceman when I first saw 'im. It was at Winchester. I was there with a Company, an' one of my young ladies was on 'er way to the stage door when a passel of tipsy soldiers tried to 'em 'er in. I dare say they didn't mean no 'arm, but she calls out and Bill 'e comes running up. Then she 'eld on to 'im so and began to cry and shake that 'e thought 'e'd better place 'er—as 'e says ' in responsible 'ands.' So of course *I* was sent for. It so 'appened we were in a 'ell of a mess, that evenin'. We were playin' in *King Dermot ; or Strongbow's Bride*—a piece all about Ireland in the ancient times. The weed—I couldn't get nothin' better—'oo was to play Strongbow 'ad gone and got drunk—so drunk 'e was locked up. Bill 'ad come off duty when 'e 'eard the young lady screech, an' 'ad ast me if 'e might stop on an' see us play. When 'e 'ears about Strongbow 'e says : ' 'Ere, won't *I* do ? I'm reglar stage-struck,' 'e says, ' and I often do things at our penny readin's.' ' Orl right,' I says, sizin' 'im up. Fact was, though I'm 'shamed to say it now, we were all a bit screwed that night. Best bit o' fun as *ever* you see ! We squeezed Bill into Strongbow's armour an' togs, prompted 'im like 'ell, an' 'arf *died* of larfin', all the time. There wasn't much of an audience that night, but I think they spots our game. The *next* night the theatre was crammed to bustin', and we'd coached up old Bill. Well : the long and short of it was—I was a widder at the time—Bill and I were married at Southampton in a week. As soon as 'e could quit the Constabulary 'e did, and joined me in

London. Then I 'ad is voice trained—don't 'e sing well? And 'e come on first as a super. But 'e was soon up to all the ropes. Well: we've rubbed along pretty well since then. For several years after I married 'im I was as 'appy as the day was long, an' kep' as straight *as* straight. I think it was that that made me so 'ealthy and kep' me so young. After a while I began to see that Bill weren't *always* to be trusted. 'E's got too kind an 'eart where women are concerned. But *there*, I got used to it! And then I 'ad my fancies too—like you, for one. Bill don't say nothin' to me, and I gen'ly leave 'im alone. And as I say, after I'm fifty I'm goin' to settle down, and so's 'e. Till then, we're goin' to enjoy ourselves.

"There's only one thing I don't like about Bill: 'n that ain't 'im; it's 'is brother—" (she gave something of a shudder). "'E's an awful big pot in the Press and runs a weekly paper. Ever come across 'im? Baxendale Strangeways! *Nice* name, ain't it? Bill says it was the name of their father's farm. Well, you know I *'ate* that there Bax. 'E's just about as bad as they make 'em."

This long speech was naturally not delivered *tout d'un trait*. It was begun on the velvet seat, and continued as they wandered down the galleries of pictures. Sometimes it was interrupted by "Shameless 'ussy . . . don't believe there was much *surprise* about it; she see 'im comin'" (nymph bathing). "My! 'E looks *fierce*, don't 'e?" "'Oo was Napoleon? Arthur Roberts used to imitate 'Arry Nicholls as Napoleon, with 'is 'and in 'is buttoned-up coat . . . so. My, I used to *larf!* I c'd always tell it was Napoleon, when 'e put is 'and in 'is coat like that, and pulled 'is 'air over 'is forred."

* * * * *

Strange to say, Bella did not much enjoy the French stage. It was no use taking her to any *comédie de mœurs* or drama, because she couldn't understand the rapid French or even much French of any kind that was spoken. So she was taken to a *Revue*; but the obvious indecency of the actors and actresses shocked her profoundly. The *clou* in one scene was the appearance and reappearance of a bedroom utensil, and she could not contain her disgust. She who had mothered so many *double entendres*, put into her mouth by librettists of the baser sort, or even coming as gag to her own imagination; she, who had never been very delicate in her choice of words, and in her twenties, before she married Bill, almost reprehensible for the things she said and sang; reserved her indecency for speech and denounced it fiercely in gesture.

Bill, she said, was much the same in a different way. There wasn't any limit to his goings-on with women, but he was always a clean-mouthed man, hated dirty talk, wouldn't have it anywhere within his hearing at the theatre, and the parts he always played admitted of nothing dubious as regards what he had to say or do.

Paris being temporarily exhausted they moved south to Monte Carlo, to give Ruthie a little sunning up before they all went back to work. Here was the greatest pleasure of the eyes that had ever come to Bella ; here she was more perfectly—and even innocently—happy than she had ever been before. The palm trees, the oranges with their ripening fruit, the flowers blooming in January, the mountains snow-crested, the blue Mediterranean, the costumes of the people, the gambling rooms at the Cercle des Etrangers et des Bains de Mer. But their happiness—for Eustace enjoyed it quite as much ; Ruth thought she was in Paradise and grew obviously stronger ; and William, the ex-policeman, was humbly dumb, clumsy and big in his amazement—was brought to an untimely close. One day there came up to them in the vestibule of the Casino a man shorter than Bill but an ugly likeness of him ; fashionably dressed ; who said : " Well—I —never ! This beats cock-fighting. Bill and Bella ! Who'd have thought it ? " And just as Bill was rather sulkily introducing him, there passed by Bennet Molyneux, who in the course of inspecting the prisons of Monaco had—naturally —to look in from time to time at Monte Carlo's Casino. His eye-glass surveyed the group sardonically and caught Eustace's eye, just as he was wonderingly shaking the hand of Bill's bad brother.

Three days afterwards he had a telegram recalling him to London. A curt note at Hankey's from Broadmead said :—

My dear Yusy,—

You have played the fool quite enough and H. at the F.O. has heard you've been escorting Bella round the sights of Monte Carlo, and worse still—for nobody minds Bella much, she's part of every young man's education—you've been colloguing with a person who is anathema maranatha at the F.O.—and quite right too. Don't excuse yourself. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse.* I'm sure you didn't mean any harm, but you mustn't be an ass. Now you've had a good swig at the cup of pleasure ; don't waste any more time over the dregs.

Come and see me to-morrow at twelve sharp and we'll go through the maps and the treaty forms. And report yourself

this afternoon at the F.O. and take your smacking from Lamps without demur. You've deserved it—but as I led you into this, I can't throw many stones at you. Drop it. In fact, when you come back next from the Niger you ought to marry some decent girl and settle down. Meantime I'll look out several likely ones. "Why don't I do the same?" Ah! why don't I. At any rate, we'll make Nigeria British first—as we can't have the Congo—and then——

Yours,
A. B.

CHAPTER XIII

A BANDIT OF THE PRESS

BAXENDALE STRANGEWAYS you could see, in the lineaments of his horrid face, might be William's brother, but it was William caricatured, coarsened, shortened, widened and vitiated. His eccentric name—he was generally called, and signed his articles "Bax," was simply that of his father's farm near Alton. He was a strange personality to have come from rural Hampshire; but its genial, unmalicious, unmoral peasantry and yeomanry have a streak of nasty Southampton alien strain running through them, just as all the Bournemouth burglaries are traceable to Southampton. That port naturally —without any blame attaching to its civic rulers—attracts to itself some of the bad blood of the world. Baxendale, no doubt, harked back in his disposition, his very cleverness, to some alien grandparent, just as, no doubt, Bill's real histrionic gifts were not evolved from his Saxon strain.

Baxendale did not lack for brains, but he was always an ugly customer and a shady character. Though he spoke with an American rather than a rustic accent, though tailors, hairdressers, hosiers, and in later years manicurists, made the best of him, he always looked "bad" to the discerning eye; always suggested—especially when he was off guard and a little "sprung," the bravo and the ruffian. In boyhood he was very ambitious, and, like Bill, absolutely refused to be interested in farm work. Both wanted to see the world. Both made full use of the excellent board school education they got at Winchester. (It was characteristic of Baxendale that when he was fully launched on London in the 'nineties, and was dining at a most exclusive club, and one of the most tactless Colonels in the British Army—an easily impressionable old ass—taking him for "one of us," said "By the bye, where were you educated?" Baxendale looked him straight in the face, as he did most people—rather truculently—and said "Winchester." And the Colonel naturally drew the wrong conclusion.)

When Bill, his younger brother, went into the Hampshire

Constabulary, Bax entered the Southampton shipping office of Dombey and Son as a clerk. He was smart at figures, but sly. They thought he sold news to the Press, they suspected him of not being quite straight, they—in short, a confidential report was sent in to the Head Office. He was next invited —with a caution—to proceed on one of their ships to Buenos Ayres and serve in their office there. Here he worked for several years, and by his ability and smartness in picking up Spanish regained the Firm's confidence to some extent. But then something so unforgivable was found out that the Head Agent simply dismissed him, and he chose to accept dismissal though he stored up the incident for future revenge.

But the "something" had brought in money, and this money attracted more money, so that he was able to found and edit a newspaper printed in Spanish and English, out of which he soon made a fortune by advertisements, lubricity, and blackmail. He had an undeniable gift for writing—the pity was that, but for this strain of ruffianism in his make-up, he might have been a really great man in literature. At one time he contributed some extraordinarily clever articles on Uruguay to the *Thunderer*, which knew nothing of his local reputation.

At last he sold the *Jornal de los Estancistas* to a syndicate, and cleared out of Buenos Ayres, which was getting uncomfortably warm. Indeed, the scar on his cheek-bone remained to tell of a close shave from a revolver bullet, for firing which an Englishman was acquitted by an Argentine jury.

He next toured through the West Indies and wrote them up. Then he took stock of New York about 1881, and settled himself in London in 1882, having meantime married a lady —really a lady, but a foolish creature—whom he met on a steamer crossing the Atlantic. (Her brother was a West Indian Governor and she had been out to pass the winter.) In course of time he tired of her, wasted some of her money, before her trustees intervened, and generally treated her badly. Yet to the end she stood by him—stands by him—so I suppose he, too, had his redeeming points. The one link between them was a great appreciation of Browning.

He was not long in London—he then had any amount of money, besides his wife's income—before he brought out the *London Argus*—as we will call it, though of course that was not its name. He and his clever staff of minor blackguards exploited to the full every weakness and caries in the London Society of the 'eighties, 'nineties and 'oughts. The *Argus*

exposed swindlers, described appetizingly though with pretended indignation dubious haunts and dancing rooms, introduced much lubricity on the plea of attacking vice—but why describe a type of weekly journal which before the War had become legion, not only in London but in the large provincial towns ?

After several libel actions from which Baxendale emerged completely victorious because he had a flair for the *véreux* in a man's or woman's past, he had become a personage so dreaded that he frequently was to be met with at the tables of the great—just to keep him quiet, or even, it may be, to find out what their political rivals were doing or contemplating. He would have made a splendid detective ; he was unquestionably in the secret service of a great power at one time till he was found to be selling its secrets to us, and perhaps diddling the foreigner with entirely bogus information.

No new Company could be floated—unless it was purely a family or privately subscribed affair—without an allotment to " Bax " of a block of shares and enormous payments in advertisements. Indeed, why he did not retire from the stage colossally rich, with a villa at Florence, a yacht in the Mediterranean and a tablet recording his generosity at St. Paul's (he gave them a wonderful Altar-piece which I think they had afterwards to return), I cannot say. But he was a gambler and a waster, ran horses and lost races, betted insanely when he lost his temper, made some great coups on the Stock Exchange, but lost hideously over the Angostura crash.

However, this summary runs on far beyond the date at which Eustace met him in the vestibule to the Cercle at Monte Carlo. But even at that time he was not the class of associate a Government Office would have liked for its officials. He was immediately interested in Eustace, a man who (it was rumoured) was about to be specially employed in African pioneering work. Baxendale had already got his eye on Africa. Those gold discoveries in the Transvaal couldn't be ignored, and the talk of " gold from the Gold Coast " was being revived. He was disposed to be very gracious to this distinguished-looking traveller whom he found in the very questionable guise of next friend to his sister-in-law. He had already heard—he who heard and remembered all scandals—that Bella was *toquée* over some explorer that had taken to going round the back of the playhouses, and was a pal of some great nobs. This was a tool that might be taken up at any time.

Eustace, who was not quite a fool or without an instinct for character, soon read him and avoided him ; but nevertheless the simple fact that he had exchanged a few commonplaces with him in a resort not precisely a School for Saints and in the company of frank Bohemians was exaggerated and made as much of as possible by Bennet Molyneux in a private letter he wrote to a Head of Department at the F.O.

But in the meantime, Baxendale Strangeways had other fish to fry. He was as full of a desire for revenge as he was for gain. He often forgot such defrauded friends or acquaintances as had helped him, never any one who had thwarted or punished him. He kept his eye on Dombey and Son ; and although his original quarrel was with Walter Gay-Dombey and the Head Agent at Buenos Ayres, he began to realize that they were passing or had passed from the scene of action, and that *Paul* was the great man now in the office. Without connecting the two in any way—as yet—his uncanny gift for detection led him to notice that in these latter months in London, William's wife had taken up a young woman (Lucilla Smith) who was already acting in her companies ; and that Paul Dombey—of whom you would never have thought it —was manifesting a strange interest in the Stage and in Shakespeare, and might frequently be seen at the Garrick Club pretending to be absorbed in actors' talk.

At this time Baxendale still lived—for long lived—in South Audley Street, with his wife : she protesting ever and again that " Baxy " was the kindest of husbands : it was only his *manner* that misled people. " That bruise ? Yes. It's tiresome : I was going into my linen cupboard—these Mayfair houses are *so* dark, behind the ' showrooms,' as I call them, and turning round to see what—no, I'm *not* crying. . . . Oh, *go* away, Elsie—there are some things a decent woman never discusses with any one. *Go !* . . ."

At different times in the ten years following the period this chapter deals with, " Baxy " was co-operating with Mrs. Warren and Sir George Thingummy in establishing a Maison de Tolérance at Roquebrune, " with all the home comforts " (he loved a bourgeois touch). It was, of course, styled an Hotel in the *London Argus* advertisements, but " Manageress : Mme. Varennes " gave it away to initiates who had read Mr. Bernard Shaw's play or seen it in the States. Between 1885 and 1895 we can follow him in imagination booming a mineral water and writing down the hotels and clubs who

preferred Schweppes ; founding an Obstetric Review for some obscure purpose ; blackmailing de Lesseps over Panamá ; clamouring for the widening of the Strand because he had a finger in the pie—with Sir James Tudell—over the rebuilding ; and running the first of the problem plays at a Soho theatre, with his mistress of the day enacting the problem. Here he turned his capital over three times, and sold the play and its American rights for £20,000, and was very nearly elected to the Athenæum. Then he turned fiercely on the dramatic authors who had black-balled him. They brought libel actions and each got a farthing's damages. (People always did when he had the time to conduct his own cases.)

He was a man of boundless energy, and obviously possessed by the Devil. Yet by some freak, or to throw dust in the Public's eyes, or because the Devil is sometimes repentant, he—very rarely—turned his trenchant pen to good account. Thus it was he who closed the Argyll Rooms—Scotland Yard had no notion there was such a place till his famous article appeared : appeared at the very time when his Roquebrune hotel was opening to its clientèle [*service*, 25 fr. à 100 fr., *selon l'étage*] : and it was he who improved the acoustics of the Albert Hall and introduced ameliorations into the clinic of parturition by his Obstetric Review.

CHAPTER XIV

INTERMEZZO

SEEING that in the earlier part of this book Eustace had expressed much interest in the Gay-Dombeys and had occasioned his correspondents to write about their doings, it may seem strange that on his first leave of absence he does not appear to have made many attempts to renew acquaintance with a family so much associated with his own, and with a personage in it to whom was mainly due his own comfortable condition as regards income. As far as I can see from his papers, he was kept from becoming intimate with them on his return from Africa by just those trifling little incidents and accidents which so often deflect and determine our fate.

First there was his mother's death; "Well: he doesn't seem to have felt *that* much," the fault-finding reader will exclaim. On the contrary, there are many indications in his records that he felt it greatly. He was not one to wear his heart on his sleeve or even a crape-band on his left arm, and probably the full force of his regret never came home to him till he was back again in Africa in the great solitudes. *Then*, the absence of her letters brought home the loss. Then the return of her spirit—mere imagination, probably, but in Africa the white man is very imaginative—to his side, the frequent sense of her presence about him for which I can offer no scientific explanation (and it is no doubt, as you suggest, purely subjective: he had read in books that you ought to feel like that, and felt so): these sensations caused him almost daily to think of the mother whose hand he had held as she lay dying, but with whom he had not talked at length for seven years. He had brought away with him a bundle of her old letters—letters written between '77 and '84—and these he would read and re-read till they conjured up her presence and brought back to him the tones of her voice.

Bella for the time was completely forgotten, as though she had written nothing on the palm of his hand or the convolutions of his brain; Adela was a dully painful scar somewhere

on his incorporeal self ; the only two things prominent in his remembrances were his mother and his mission, which last frequently evoked thoughts of Broadmead.

Yet while still in England his mother's death occasioned no void in his life : he was too much occupied to think about it. He ordered note-paper with a narrow black band and similar visiting cards. He arranged a two-guinea annual subscription at a Highgate florist's for the planting and upkeep of the grave. (This bond was kept by the florist as long as he remained in England and then forgotten till the florist saw announced in the *Daily Telegraph* of May 14, 1887, the African Traveller's return, when he hurried to make things suspiciously new and even raw in the matter of bedded-out plants.)

But about the Dombeys : Morven after returning to London in the autumn of 1884 had called first at 102, Onslow Square, and been told that Mr. Gay-Dombey was away at Bath tending his gout, and that his wife was with him, the other inmates of the house being also scattered on autumn visits. A call on Paul in the City would fulfil all indebtedness. Him, however, he found cordial and receptive, and yet with something on his mind which made his eyes a little vague ever and again, even though he had looked very direct over palm-oil and shea-butter questions, being quite *au fait* with Susan K.-T.'s oil-cake projects. Paul had asked him to dinner, but he was already off to Brighton. At a later date he was again asked and went. Both the men felt a little embarrassed when they greeted one another, because Eustace had undoubtedly met Paul one night in close conference with Bella on the production of *As You Like It*, and Paul had heard much plainer gossip as to Eustace and Bella at Brighton.

There was no other guest at this very quiet dinner in Portland Place—a dinner, however, that was perfect in all its appointments—Diana was never humble about her meals and elegancies. Paul was distrait in spite of every effort to be interested in where Eustace was next going and the great schemes that were adumbrated, because just then there was another hitch in the Syndicate : a granddaughter of Mrs. Siddons wanted to play Rosalind, and her claims to do so were strongly backed by two retired actors on the Syndicate.

Diana, on the other hand, for once was charmed with her solitary guest, because he praised the missionaries so heartily and convincedly. However, she rather cooled towards him over the cup of Caravan tea which she served in the drawing-

room at half-past nine, because—for lack of anything to say—he had asked after her "Home of Rest" at Putney. He knew quite well it had a different title; but the little demon that comes to you in a dull evening when your thoughts are all elsewhere and the person you are talking to makes no great appeal to your sympathies suggested the phrase. Diana had replied in a fluted voice, "I am afraid you have been misinformed as to its title and its purpose, Mr. Morven——"

And Eustace: "A—lady was—er—telling me all about it the other day, and was saying—that——" Then remembering that the "lady" was Bella and "all about it" was some rather pithy things impossible to repeat, and uttered moreover—though quite kindly—in reference to a talk she had just had with Paul, Eustace stopped, feeling it was a mistaken topic. So he concluded with: "But of course you are quite right."

"I generally am, Mr. Morven," Diana had replied with that ominously "pleasant" laugh, which means you are "turned-down"; and, as she rose soon afterwards to receive his "Good night and . . . perhaps good-bye," she refrained from asking him to spend Christmas with them at 102, Onslow Square.

He left cards of farewell on Walter and Florence and they at once asked him to dinner on the night after he would have sailed: not knowing, of course. And Suzanne was specially coming to meet him, remembering his mother, and further interested because she had heard much about him from the Lansdells and Broadmead.

Altogether, his feeling about his eight months' leave and the way it was spent rather gave him afterwards the sensation mentally of having drunk a good deal of bad champagne the previous day, and now having to live it down and not reflect lest one be tortured with remorse. So he thought chiefly of his mother when he was not thinking hard about treaty-making and pushing past rapids, and capsizing in canoes and rescuing his precious boxes whilst the men righted the rail dugouts which carried Cæsar and his fortunes.

Politically his two years' journeys in southern and eastern Nigeria—almost up to the limits of the Great Desert—were enormously successful; and in the south-eastern part of his range coupled with great discoveries in geography and zoology—as to which I refer you to his own works. He therefore returned to England in 1887 a C.M.G. and a likely candidate for Gold Medals and other distinctions, and Sir Walter—feeling somehow that the Dombey family might have done a little

more in hospitality for the son of such an old friend of the house as Richard Morven, greeted his newspaper-announced return by an invitation to the annual family dinner described in the opening chapter. So this summary—as far as Eustace is concerned—brings us back to where we started.

And during these two years and three months how did things fare with Paul and Lucilla?

With the bond of the child between them, and the renewal of their lover-like relations in the summer of 1885, began again for Paul a period in which he hated himself for his weakness and duplicity, and for Lucilla an alternation of feverish happiness and that dull despair that robs life of all colour. Cambridge was more or less the centre of their gyrations.

Mrs. Rupert Smith was in no way inquisitive. Lucilla, however ambiguous her position, seemed to have no lack of money; indeed her earned and acknowledged income was handsome enough. Her mother had since been told that the father of the child was an Englishman whom Lucilla had met in Russia, but there were reasons why he could not marry her. Whether he were the "god-father" that came every now and again to Cambridge was a matter of indifference to the herbaceous borderer. It was far better in these cases not to meddle. The child's nurse, of course, had long since decided Paul was little Rupert's father; but the lady and gentleman were *quite* the lady *and* gentleman, and it wasn't her business to gossip. No doubt there was something which if she only knew explained everything, and as she didn't know it, well why wake sleeping dogs? And she admired Paul greatly. Such a fine figure of a man, and such a kind, grave manner. Always had a pleasant word for you, and *generous!* But even these reflections were uttered in soliloquy.

Paul was not so often seen in conjunction with Lucilla at Cambridge itself as to arouse interest among those who mattered. Their more intimate meetings were at Royston, Ely, Bury St. Edmunds, Saffron Walden, even Newmarket, when there were no races on. And always in the interval between Saturday and Monday. To explain things better to Diana—or rather to explain why the week-end outing (not at that date made fashionable by statesmen) was nearly always spent in the Eastern Counties and more especially had Cambridge as its core, Paul proffered a great and growing interest in Cambridge as an educational centre. He really was naturally interested in the New Sciences, his travels and his innate

Imperialism made him eager to foster the right kind of knowledge in the coming generation of students (as Fate ordained it he will have had to skip at least one generation : the classicists, mathematicians and theologians have been too strong for him). It therefore required far less effort to throw himself into the endowment of Ethnology at Cambridge than to associate with persons of wholly different disposition and diet to himself at the Garrick Club or behind the scenes, or even in full conclave over the revival of Shakespeare.

Cambridge Professors, however, are practical men. And after the first afternoon call on a Saturday or a Monday they could not well waste their time on a vague though agreeable stranger unless something was to come of it. Paul, too, felt that his aberrations in polygamy ought at least to pay some conscience money. The long and the short of it was that he started the great Trumpington Museum of Ethnology which eventually was finished almost at his cost. The two or three professors who took up the scheme with an enthusiasm only to be met with rarely in one or other of the great Churches, repudiated the idea at first of dipping too deeply into Paul's purse. Great Britain was reeking with wealth just then, and commencing one of her great Imperial flights in which she would add—through Eustace and others—hundreds of thousands of square miles to her empire. An appeal therefore was sent out stating that a gentleman (" one of our merchant princes ") would give one thousand pounds if twenty-nine other persons wouldjointly subscribe the other twenty-nine thousand pounds of the total needed to build an Ethnological Museum on the Trumpington Road, which should fitly house the stored-away ethnological collections that had long been accumulating. The Museum moreover would be worked in connection with the newly-founded Chair of Ethnology which had been partly endowed by the generous donor of the conditional thousand pounds.

The response was what you might have imagined it would be in the period behind the 'nineties. Only one other thousand pounds was received, and that was from Diana. She had guessed Paul to be the first donor and was delighted that the dear boy should have such a genuine and wholesome interest in his life ; a good deal better for him than this rather feverish interest in Shakespeare which perforce led him into the Society of—well—of rather *odd* persons. Kind-hearted, no doubt, as Mrs. Strangeways was ; but a little rackety, and —she would have thought—*singularly dissonant* with Paul's

quiet disposition. But now that Shakespeare, thanks to Paul —was once more a favourite with the play-going public— Irving was understood to have approached Lucilla and to have become the directing force behind the Syndicate which Paul had relinquished—that dear erratic Paul now actually *disliked* meeting Shakespearean actors and actresses! Diana understood—with a good-natured laugh—that Mrs. Strangeways was not perhaps *quite* his style; but Lucilla Smith? What fault could you find with *her*? Absolutely a lady and of known people, and living quietly and irreproachably with Susan Knipper-Totes, in a part of St. John's Wood, so respectable that it might almost be called South Hampstead.

All this to Suzanne; who thought a great deal but said very little. Of course Paul and Lucilla skated on very thin ice, and only a wife like Diana could have remained serenely unconscious of the relations between them. She was mentally above the coarser forms of jealousy, she had faith as implicit in Paul as in herself, she was a great lady of majestic appearance who was most unapproachable to gossipers. The rest of the world assumed Lucilla had some one in the background, because she lived a retired life and rejected in an absolute way all advances. Her life in St. John's Wood was claustral; therefore, outside St. John's Wood—eh? But who? But also what the devil did it matter? They traced her (so to speak) to Wimpole and her mother and the little boy by some unknown husband of her youth, and there they left her for more interesting quarry. The only person who had put her recent story together, without much difficulty, was Baxendale Strangeways; but his time for striking had not yet come.

The one character of any importance to my story who requires writing up and explaining during this intermezzo is Sir James Tudell. I forget the exact date of his knighthood, and quite possibly have contradicted myself more than once about it. It may have been in 1886 over the Healtheries which he had backed), or it may have been at the commencement of 1887, the Jubilee year—the exact date really doesn't matter enough for a long and grubby search to be made through old press-cuttings or bound newspapers at the British Museum. I have generally called him by his title to distinguish him from his son, James Tudell, Junr. (the ornithologist), who married Adela Lacrevy in 1884, and had three children by the middle of 1887.

Sir James Tudell was born somewhere about 1834, the fifth

child of Robert or Robin Toodle and Mary or Polly Basset. Most of his elder and younger brothers and sisters died or faded from records except Harry (like his father, an engine-driver of great respectability), Jemima who became a valued housekeeper somewhere in West Marylebone (the " Aunt Jemima " of Edith McMaster), and Bella (the youngest but one of a family of ten) who as already related, became Bella Delorme, the actress.

James from childhood upwards showed his ability, pugnacity, overbearing disposition, delight in eating and drinking (though he never abused alcohol, being much too anxious to get on and keep fit). He was eager to go to school and never played the truant. He was uncommonly sharp about money, yet to his mother he was as generous as his means and his eagerness for evening classes permitted. He took no interest in his other brothers and sisters, fearing lest they might prove a drag on him, in his passionate determination to fight his way to the class of the " nobs." They on their part developed a proper pride. The engine-driver, who became in time the senior in the service of the North Western and was illustrated in the Strand Magazine (when he drove the engine that pulled Royalty to Holyhead—for Ireland—or to Carlisle—for the West Highlands), refused to the last to admit the relationship. Bella once in the way satisfied malice by confronting him and his wife at bazaars.

Jemima and Harry Toodle kept the former spelling of their name. Bella changed her name so often that the plebeian Toodle was lost under a variety of other designations.

But James Tudell had decided when he was only seventeen and first entered the service of the North Western as a goods clerk that the spelling Tudell suited him best and " made the name less ridic'lous." He was therefore registered in the name of Tudell by the North-Western pay-books, and in that name he married at twenty-two Miss Clara Simmonds, a teacher in the National schools. They used to meet at some evening class or other,—was there then a Birkbeck Institute ?

James Tudell wanted to marry into a class above himself. His wife must be refined and have had no associations with the streets or anything verging on low life. Since he was seventeen he had—to use the phrase then current—" been no innercent," but his marriage must be instinct with respectability. And in all such points Miss Clara Simmonds met him in sympathy. She was the daughter of a Nonconformist

minister and her mother had been the pattern of all the virtues. She was quite pretty enough in her youth to attract a young man, she seemed much more learned than she really was, and her refinement and horror of indelicacy exceeded all known bounds. There were very few portions of the human body or its functions which could be alluded to by her or those who spoke with her, save under cumbrous paraphrases —if indeed at all. The fiction she permitted herself to read was positively Lutheran in its hard chastity (the *Schönberg-Cotta Family* was her favourite story, and its characters passed from one prayer meeting to another, with blameless espousals in between). In such descriptions of life, the approaching birth of a child apparently came as an immense surprise to both husband and wife about three weeks before the event, and the wife conveyed the news in gasps and with a face turned towards a window. " James—dearest—if God is very good to us—in—maybe—another month—when the primroses open their pale petals to the spring sunshine—another—little —life may be amongst us." Up to that time the theoretical James or the ideal James Tudell of Clara's imagining had noticed positively no change in his spouse's appearance.

All this fastidiousness James Tudell, far from resenting, approved in his own home in Holloway ; though outside it, in the railway yards, among the carmen, the porters, the ticket clerks, his speech was—like theirs—infused with obscenity, and his stories such as even the married carmen thought a bit too thick or too " blue." But as he invariably wiped his boots most carefully before entering his spotless little home ; so with Mrs. Tudell and his young children his language as far as possible rivalled in delicacy that of his wife.

From being everybody's junior, a husky lad of seventeen or eighteen—clerk, errand-runner, parcel-checker, goods-tallier, stores clerk, assistant booking-office clerk, James Tudell ascended all the rungs of the ladder that leads to Traffic Manager. He learnt much about locomotives and coal, much about the ways of the men, about signals, and thefts from goods vans, about brakes, about carriage construction, and refreshment contracts : even about the right kind of paste to use for labels that won't come off. He was honest in small things from ethical considerations but also because of his huge ambitions. He was dreaded by the men because he was felt to be watching them and always on the side of the Company. He was a clever boxer and not easy to tackle on the side of physical force. . . . One day his chance came.

A person high in authority talked to him peevishly about a derelict Irish line in which the North Western Company was interested. "Who is to pull it straight, *I* don't know." Tudell replied: "Send me."

He was taken at his word. In six months he wrought a great change, chiefly by not drinking whisky and not tolerating those who did, and importing a select band of men from London or the suburbs pledged like himself not to touch spirits till the line paid a dividend. At last in 1869, after ten years of the hardest work in his life, he had made his East Central Irish Line one of the best working railways in the three kingdoms. A railway which actually got in front of some of the great northern lines of England in some of its cunning notions. Then a bargain was struck over his head, after the fashion of great and callous companies, and he was told to return to England and take up a comparatively humble position.

He revolted at the injustice. He had also in some way or another been disappointed by the Great Western, had in fact fallen between two stools. He moved in every practical direction for revenge and a recovered position. He wanted to injure the North Western's Holyhead business and carry out a project for better intercourse between London, Bristol and Ireland and an immense development of Bristol as a shipping centre by means of Avonmouth. The Dombey line occurred to him as a means to the end. He called on Walter Gay-Dombey and reminded him that his mother (dead some years) had been Florence's pensioner and known to Walter himself in his youth. Would the Dombey Line and its connections back him in a Bill to make a really direct route from London to its great western Port—Bristol and its suburbs, instead of the ridiculous roundabout Didcot turn; and also a line that would bring down the rates of the Great Western like Billy oh! etc., etc?

He got the backing he wanted. It took four years to bribe the Bill through Parliament, the G.W.R. and N.W.R. strenuously opposing it, and two other railway companies covertly assisting its progress.

The bribes on his side were either gigantic fees to Parliamentary Counsel with great family connections in Upper or Lower Chamber, indirect assistance to needy Parliamentarians so that they might really get up the questions at issue and make convincing speeches. (Much as the Brewers down to a few years ago used to pay several thousands of pounds to clever Q.C.'s or K.C.'s to overwhelm the House of Commons

with two-hour-long speeches on the perfect wholesomeness of unwholesome beer, their speeches being afterwards described in the Conservative press as "masterly.") In short, Tudell did all that you can do if you have a long purse behind you, and persistence; and, beginning in 1871, he got his Bill through the House of Lords by the early spring of 1875. When Professor Lacrevy first met him in 1878 the Direct Bristol Route (now scarcely to be picked out of the Great Western system) was already made and in working order as far as Newbury.

It was completed to the new docks on the Avon estuary by 1880. Everything was done on the cheap. The line was in places ill-constructed; the carriages were showy but shaky. Everything was second-rate or even third-rate. But this was done so as to get *through*. Once the line really did function and could bandy freights with the statelier rival routes his purpose was achieved. More money came in. He then gradually brought the line and the rolling stock up to standard. He attracted tourists by posters and handbooks. He did not —as Lacrevy predicted—make his terminus at Regent's Park and draw the Zoo into his meshes. (He had projects for wheedling London to give up its then neglected southern appanages to Regent's Park, greatly to enlarge the Zoo and run it as a company, extending it to meet his terminus at the top of Portland Place—all this with gigantic building schemes for a new residential quarter, delightfully mixed up with Botanical and Zoological Gardens.) He had to be contented with the much poorer scheme of a station in Marylebone. But this at any rate was a mile and a half nearer civilization than forlorn Paddington.

But the disappointment about Regent's Park (and I for one wish he had succeeded) rather took his interest away from the Direct Bristol Line. The venture had achieved its purpose, and just before we met him first at the Dombey dinner he was already considering overtures from the Great Western Directorate. Between 1872 and 1887 he had pushed his short, square-tipped fingers into many pies—building, shipping, insurance, railways, foundries, and what not else.

He had become intimate with Baxendale Strangeways, and took up such of his schemes as were legally honest; on the other hand he worked with the Dombey group in carrying out ideas distinctly of Imperial benefit and purpose. He was also one of those who "advised Lord Feenix as to his investments"; this brought him into close touch with the

government of the day, for no matter which party was in or out, Feenix was always one of the oligarchy that with a bundle of permanent officials really governed us. If Lord Feenix was not himself at the Board of Trade or the Colonies or the India Office his cousin or brother-in-law, his uncle or his stockbroker was, as representing the other side ; or he was closely in touch with their private secretaries. Insolent as he might be to persons not of his caste or of his rank, he no longer tried such manners on Tudell, whom he treated as an equal. He had in their earliest relations attempted the eye-glass tricks, the staring and not answering, the contemptuously cool treatment. But Tudell on such occasions had no manners, could in fact be far ruder than Feenix, and Feenix was at heart a little afraid of him. And in finance he felt sure of him.

Tudell was far too ambitious to be consciously dishonest. He felt a personal pride in making all his schemes pay. He could make use of a Baxendale, and yet do nothing which should open up opportunities for blackmail. Even a Baxendale moreover might sometimes invent an honest scheme for giving the Public what it wanted : he did not actually set out *only* to develop dishonest methods of making money. He had once tried to diddle Tudell, and the latter calling him into his private office had turned the key and given him such a terrific box on the ear as had turned him temporarily sick and deaf, and yet left him with no thought of revenge ; there was too much money at stake and Tudell could be an appalling enemy if you had a past like Baxendale's.

So you see, the middle 'eighties contained some very forceful if unpleasant personalities. And although the Marquis of Wiltshire lived in a serene and rarefied atmosphere, and soared high over all these groundlings (as he thought) in shaping the Nation's policy, yet the tail was already beginning to wag the dog, just beginning. When we left the 'oughts of the New Century and entered the 'teens, the Tail had become the real motive power, though Sir James Tudell had just been consigned to his newly-made family vault in Berkshire.

CHAPTER XV

CHAPELMEAD

THE day after the Dombey party (May 27, 1887) Eustace received a note from Sir Mulberry Hawk asking him to be at the F.O. at 11.45 sharp the following day. On his arrival there Sir Mulberry, after beaming at him through his spectacles, saying very little, opening despatch boxes and initialling their contents and locking them, touched a bell. An office messenger appeared. "Is the Secretary of State in his room?"

"Yes, Sir Mulberry."

"Would you ask if his Lordship is desirous of seeing Mr. Morven?"

A pause, during which Eustace, though sitting, felt his knees tremble.

"His Lordship is at liberty."

"Come along, Morven," said Sir Mulberry. The office-keeper escorted them, and in a few seconds Eustace was bowing and—no, not shaking—nobody ventured to *shake* Lord Wiltshire's hand, but taking the limb very respectfully, pressing it and returning it. Sir Mulberry had retired. Eustace ventured to look the great man in the face. He encountered a kindly look in return and a twinkle of humour in the large dark grey eyes under black brows. He realized a domed forehead, hair of iron grey (black not long since), clustering in short curls about the temples and nape, a full moustache and thick short beard. For the rest, tall of stature, clad in long frock-coat and trousers with baggy knees—an elderly Hercules, a little spare of frame and badly dressed in mid-Victorian garments.

"Sit down, Mr. Morven. I like standing." And then ensued an exhilarating conversation. Eustace had expected from experience of other elderly statesmen, also massive and large, that there would be the normal slow sentences—thoughts with difficulty concentrated on the abstruse subject of Africa—speech also used to conceal as much as possible the real prepossessions of the speaker, words of a vague character

interspersed with "er's"—"ah's"—and "Let me see's." But this was quite different. A quiet, consecutive, business-like cross-examination, some errors in Eustace's too enthusiastic replies gently corrected or queried: considerable sense of humour and a little malice, an enjoyment of a joke, or an incongruity, but no laugh, only a genial smile. In short, a very encouraging interview.

In African matters Eustace felt he was talking to an equal, for Lord Wiltshire in rather a stormy youth had visited parts of Africa and kept his eyes open, and since then had read much and remembered all he read. And outside Africa he was immeasurably the superior of the Consul to whom he was talking. Yet not unduly self-assertive.

He was with Lord Wiltshire nearly an hour, and from the occasional furtive entrance of messengers or précis writers was aware that other persons of much greater importance than himself were being kept waiting. But Lord Wiltshire, unperturbed, continued to put his questions and ponder over the answers.

At last he closed down the conversation, extended a hand to Eustace, and in the hand-grasp managed to advance him several paces towards the open door and the again-entering messenger. ("This," thought Eustace, "is evidently a trick which all Secretaries of State have to acquire in half-a-dozen lessons on taking up the seals—how in bidding your visitors good-bye to convey at the same time that the door is yawning for them.") However, the strain of the interview had been considerable and he was not sorry to find himself back in Sir Mulberry's room, with "Lamps" looking at him even kindlier than before.

A few days afterwards the post brought him a letter headed Wiltshire House, Piccadilly, W., in which Mr. Morven was asked if he would give "Lord Wiltshire and myself the pleasure of a Saturday till Monday stay at Chapelmead. If you are inclined to accept—the country is looking so pretty just now—you will find a train leaving St. Pancras at 4. Please ask for the Wiltshire saloon carriage reserved for our guests." The letter was signed "G. Wiltshire."

Eustace was of course aware that the "G" stood for Gertrude, Marchioness of Wiltshire, and that Chapelmead, their splendid Elizabethan Manor house, once an abbey, was on the borders of Herts and Bucks, and not far from Harpenden.

Only a few days to get ready the right kind of clothes after an African exile. Anxious consultations with tailors and with

Arthur Broadmead. Who when he heard about it from Eustace wasn't surprised, because he too had been convoked, and Yusy needn't feel shy, he would look after him ; but he must try to rid himself of that pathetic appeal in his eyes. Otherwise men would think him an ass, even if their wives fell in love with the bewildered explorer.

A few practical hints, and Eustace's portmanteau and dressing-case contained the essentials for a man not expected to be a fop at a statesman's country house in early June. Fortunately it was one of those rare seasons in which there was nothing to shoot or hunt, and no sport entailing a special rig-out. A pair of tennis shoes and flannels would meet all reasonable calls on his muscles and agility.

A quarter to four at St. Pancras : ticket taken : newspapers bought and Eustace conducted by a porter (all obsequiousness and expecting a florin tip) to the special saloon-carriage reserved for Lord Wiltshire and his week-end guests. So august was the reservation that carriage windows were not even defaced by any label announcing the saloon's special purpose. Consequently ever and again as the great express was filling up small parties of flushed women and men paused before it and said : " 'Ere, we'll get in 'ere : 'seems plenty of room, and yer can't talk about *class*, when all the thirds is full " ; only to be met by an official—so superior as to be almost out of uniform—who murmured something in their ears which caused them to draw back with an " Oh lor ! " and meekly follow a guard who promised to fit them in somewhere.

(Eustace was afterwards told by Broadmead that once when he was going down to Chapelmead and a hot and anxious countrywoman had come up to the saloon with her many parcels, and a superior eye-glassed guest had been heard to exclaim, " Howwid kweacher ; she weally ought to know this ain't her style," Lord Wiltshire—the train was near starting —had leant out and assisted her in with her day's shopping, assuring her there was *plenty* of room, had talked with her interestedly on poultry farming—to the great annoyance of the superior one, who had hoped for a conference about Asia Minor ; and at St. Albans had politely handed her out and her parcels after her, assuring her that such attentions were only meet as he was her landlord and she was his tenant. Lord Wiltshire did such things ever and again.)

However, on this occasion nothing so romantic happened ; though a great deal did happen in twelve minutes. Eustace found three other people already in the saloon : one of them

Perceval Dombey who gave him a rather cool recognition, evidently wondering what business he had in this reserved carriage. Then there came up a cross-looking lady who parted crossly with her maid (the latter going with jewel case to the third-class carriages reserved for the *valetaille*), and the cross-looking lady looking crossly through a *face-à-main* at the inmates of the carriage, and then settling herself peevishly in a corner seat. Then came Suzanne, who parted charmingly with *her* maid for their brief separation, and at once turned to Eustace with smiles and said, " *How* delightful ! Brought the Chimpanzi ? Oh, *why* didn't you ! Lady Wiltshire'll be *so* disappointed." Then Arthur Broadmead, who exchanged a mere wink of intimacy and talked to three of the other guests at once after shaking hands in the new style with Lady Feenix ; then more guests frightened at being nearly late ; and then, two minutes before the hour, the great statesman himself, lumbering slowly towards the carriage, quite sure that the train would not start before he was in it, and that the station-superintendent at his side was a guarantee of that.

Then while he was bowing to all he could see, and sinking with a sigh into the fauteuil appropriate to him, the train started ; and looking round Lord Wiltshire said, " Anybody brought an evening newspaper ? " It was just what every one except Eustace had never thought of doing. They explained that travelling with one who must be the recipient of all the world's news, it seemed unnecessary. Eustace however, clearing his throat, stammered out that he had brought three. " Good man ! " said his host. " Hand 'em over."

" I should have thought, Er-R-robbut," said the Cross Lady, " you never needed to *look* at a newspaper."

" Should you, my dear ? Then that's where you're wrong. I look at 'em to read the news which I never get from my colleagues."

(Perhaps also, it occurred to Eustace, he was very tired, and needed the newspapers as a blind for his taciturnity, for he said little to any one on the journey.)

The guests—twenty-five or so—formed themselves into coteries and talked. Suzanne gathered Broadmead and Eustace to herself. She told Broadmead that Eustace was a sort of family connection, a kind of cousin-in-business, and that they shared terrible trade secrets, inherited from fathers who plotted together in the City ; and this vouching for

Eustace on the part of a lovely peeress somehow ran him up in Broadmead's opinion, though he was far from being a snob. It—together with Lord Wiltshire's cordiality over the papers —decided several of the Chapelmead guests that although they couldn't quite place Eustace and although he had a little the look of the Man from the back of Beyond, they would be cautious about snubbing him.

But it had little effect on the rather sombrely dressed cross lady who sat apart in much hauteur and looked out of window. She was really Lord Wiltshire's half-sister, much younger than he. She had made a not very brilliant marriage, rendered worse by her perpetual crossness. Her means were not large and she lived in a poky little house at the back of Eaton Place. Her husband had some small Government sinecure and she was striving to get three rather plain daughters married. She had an immense reverence for her step-brother and an immense scorn for every one else. To bring home to her fellow-guests on such occasions the fact that she stood on the steps of the throne and that they might only enter if announced by the Lord Chamberlain, she always with slow ostentation called her brother, the premier, by his first name, which she pronounced Er-r-*rob*but, as with a rolling of drums. Very often she got no further than this invocation, either forgetting what she wanted to say, or being so obviously unheard by the great statesman.

At the Chapelmead private station the express duly stopped to set down the House party, their maids and valets and their luggage. Four open carriages and a couple of omnibuses were waiting to convey all those guests and servants to the house who did not prefer to walk. Broadmead and several of the young men opted for the lovely stroll through immemorial avenues and across uplands and dales and past lakelets and tiny streams to Chapelmead House. Eustace not being invited did not accompany them ; he certainly did not wish to hang on to Broadmead. Lord Wiltshire carried off Suzanne. Eustace was standing irresolute when a plump, cheery-faced, elderly lady accosted him and said, " *Come,* you shall be *my* squire."

He soon found himself seated opposite to this comic aunt —as she seemed to be—whom all her intimates called " Cooey," but who turned out to be (after inquiry late at night from Broadmead,) Lady Wiltshire's sister with a name no more distinguished than Frederica Thruston. " Cooey " virtually lived with the Wiltshires though she had a little

house of her own in Kensington. She was teased and laughed at, made the victim of endless booby traps and practical jokes ; her screams were so stimulating and hearty when she was really frightened that it was a treat to frighten her ; at the same time her laughter at herself and at the success of the trick so hearty and so good-natured that every decent person felt she was a dear old duck whom it was a shame to take advantage of. She was a special providence to guests at Chapelmead, because under her boisterous *bonhomie* she hid (in reality) a very sensitive nature, ever on the look-out to save other people pain, discomfort or any sense of awkwardness. She was always on the spot when shy people like Eustace were momentarily puzzled what to do, and directed them to do the right thing. Or if they were snubbed by the youngest son of the house—a prince of prigs—she was there to turn the tables on him and make *him* seem ridiculous.

But the carriage also contained a dull and very haughty Irish peer, revenging himself on all "outsiders" for his impecuniousness, and imagining himself the possessor of the most exquisite French accent, which he displayed by pointless anecdotes, supposed to be derived from a far-back career in diplomacy. Loath as I am to introduce anything so vulgar, when writing of Chapelmead, as Ally Sloper, he was—so Eustace affirmed—the unconscious model on which Ally Sloper's artist founded his pictures of the Dook Snook. Like him he had a tiny imperial and two tufts of moustache, a Norman nose and many wrinkles. He also wore an obvious wig and an eye-glass, and never spoke to any one—voluntarily—below the rank of baronet. And the fourth person, whom in order of rank and sex I should have named first, was the half-sister of "Er-r-*rob*but." (She turned out to be the Lady Adeliza Braithwaite, when names were correctly ascertained.) She entered the carriage cross, because her brother had not taken her but had chosen Suzanne. She answered Cooey curtly, ignored Eustace so completely that he felt like Mr. Wells's Invisible Man (not yet written), and only gave an occasional vinegary smile and uric-acid shrug of meagre shoulders when Lord Avonmore imparted something in a low tone which was possibly derogatory as to the "lot" with which they travelled this short distance. But Cooey was not dismayed. She kept up a lively prattle with Eustace, drew him out, and said, "You *must* tell that to my sister this evening ! No wonder my brother-in-law told us you were really interesting" (a meaning look from Lord Avonmore to the aloof Lady

Adeliza and a slight shrug from her). "And when we've had tea I must show you the dogs. We've got *such* a darling Chow."

So that when the landau drew up before the thirteenth century doorway at which great Abbots had once stood receiving or dismissing guests, Eustace felt quite light-hearted and no longer dismayed.

Lord Bletchley (the eldest son) was there to receive them, and Cooey made with emphasis the introduction; so that Lord Bletchley himself found out his room and took him to it, up two or three flights of stairs and round corners and up more little flights, and along a corridor. Each of the rooms —bedrooms at any rate—was named after some English statesman or character in English history. (If you had asked about "British" history then—a history which would also include the noteworthy people and events of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, they would have stared at you as uncomprehendingly as they still do at English Universities.)

Eustace's room was called the Palmerston; and there on the wall were engravings of that debonnaire straw-chewing personage, and little pictures—daguerrotypes, prints, water-colours of his times. Moreover the furniture though providing the necessary comforts was quite Palmerstonian and quaintly ugly.

After a perfunctory hand-wash, Eustace found his way downstairs to where they were having tea—guided erratically by a hum of voices. Lady Wiltshire was dispensing the tea in a splendid gallery, with a long array of men-in-armour, well-cushioned window-seats in which the young persons and the skittish had established flirting parties of vexatious intimacy to those not in the swim. Again an anxious moment for Eustace. He had been told that Lady Wiltshire was a very alarming person, inclined to be brusque and informal when conventionality and courtesy might be expected; how she had more than once kept an ambassador waiting a quarter of an hour at her left elbow, her head persistently turned to chatter with a child or an intimate friend. Some recommended frankly that you had better *not* greet her at all when you first came, but let yourself grow on her till at last she herself *asked* you who you were.

But Eustace—Oh, how Yusyish! Broadmead would have said—had old-fashioned, middle-class notions of politenes; so with slight deviations in his walk he threaded his way through the seated, sprawling, standing parties—quite thirty

people—to the tea-table ; and walking up to the great lady said, " I must introduce myself : I am Eustace Morven, and you very kindly wrote to me to ask me down." Several—including Lord Avonmore and Lady Adeliza—looked to see him slain socially then and there for his presumption—that is to say made piteously ridiculous by Lady Wiltshire's complete absorption in some one else or in the tea-urn ; but on the contrary—liking his eyes and his general appearance she turned to greet him as an old friend—" And *how* kind of you to come—just after you'd got back too, when I'm *sure* you wanted to go and see your own people. Can you squeeze on to this settee and I'll give you some tea—Oh ! you know Lady Feenix ! What a good job ! Now I needn't introduce you to any one, because every one knows her."

[Score number two, the newspapers being number one.]

Lord Wiltshire was talking to Suzanne not far away—standing up as usual. Lord Feenix had just come in with the second son—Lord Martin Brinsley. He had left town earlier to play golf for the first time at Chapelmead ; Arthur Balfour having come to teach them.

After tea, " Cooey " remembered her promise to show him the dogs, and he duly fell in love with the Chow—then quite a novelty ; and the Chow after the manner of his tribe sniffed very suspiciously and withdrew sharply from any caress, but was too well-bred to be actively hostile. Then his conductress showed him where the smoking-room was, and here he made acquaintance with the sons of the house and some of the male guests. The golfers had come in and were calling for drinks ; Lord Avonmore was scanning the evening papers and grumbling at the way stocks and shares were going.

A great painter was discussing art with Lord Bletchley and quite unconventionally ; pointing out the ridiculousness of Ruskin's Turner worship ; how there was nothing more beautiful than actuality, and how far off from actuality—save in his sketches—was Turner. Lord Feenix who had inherited some Turners and was naturally interested in their market value repudiated these attacks rather offensively, and was assisted by Perceval Dombey who said no cultured person wanted actuality, don't you know ; that the landscapes imagined by Turner's brain and transmitted through his optic nerves were far better than anything Nature could devise. The painter begged to differ. He was humble enough to believe that no imagining of man could compete with the beauty of reality. Ruskin simply imported into Turner's

work his own far superior appreciation of beauty. He was perverse, since it was largely his teaching that had shown us the value of a conscientious reproduction, a photographic reproduction—if you will—of stone, tree, sky, water, and the work of man's hands. Turner's faults were largely of his time. Bad pigments, and a dislike to discomfort. The modern realist school scorned to paint "studio" pictures: we went in for out-of-door work, whether the rain fell, the sun burnt, or loafers stared and asked questions. Turner's *sketches* were so good because he painted them then and there, *en plein air;* his finished pictures so dam' bad because they were fabricated in a studio, and their corners and foregrounds were full of "studio gloom." His architecture more often than not was out of the perpendicular; his trees and plants resembled nothing that ever grew, his human figures were laughable; in his colour scheme there was no mauve—and mauve was everywhere in nature—and when he was bored in finishing a picture he simply daubed Indian Red over everything in the foreground. He had none of his sun-shadows right and couldn't for the life of him paint the green in grass or the emerald in a curving wave; and so on.

Aloysius Brinsley, Lord Wiltshire's youngest son, just up from Oxford and accompanied by a slithery tutor or familiar who glided about whispering suggestions and comments, and occasionally sniggering with his pupil (giving Eustace the impression of being an odious toady [1]): Lord Aloysius inquired at this point how the painter liked Burne Jones. The painter, however, was tired, and had shot his bolt in his ineffective war against state hypocrisy. So he merely replied, "Very much." Which baffled Aloysius who had prepared (assisted by the tutor) a battery of superior arguments which were not required. Lord Aloysius—Eustace realized in course of time—had but one passion: the Church of England. He identified Burne Jones's art with the right kind of Church of England and there his interest in Art—in those far-back days—ended.

Lord Bletchley's main purpose in life was to please and conciliate. He had no opinions of his own, except that his wife was the prettiest woman he had ever met, and his baby son the jolliest infant. Physically he was a smaller, shorter, more anæmic likeness of his father, not born for argument or

[1] These impressions must be taken with reserve. Sir Eustace condemned rather freely in his notes and journal people whom he found contentious and unsympathetic.—H. H. J.

debate, weak indeed in physique, but when it came to be tested—as it did afterwards—with a truly martial soul. He would have been a crusader—though a crusader in bad health—like his far back ancestors—but in these times he replaced the recovery of the Holy Cities in his goal of enthusiasm by the extension of the Empire and its defence. Lord Bletchley held the balance even on the subject of Turner, saying at intervals, "There's a good deal in what you say——"; or "But you must remember——", or "But surely you wouldn't have us——", or "Of course, if you put it that way——"

The theme was frankly boring to Lord Avonmore, who had sold every heirloom picture he had once possessed and lived in a luxurious London flat where the chief works of art were from the brush of Jan van Beers and of the openly sensuous type. He was much more anxious to get out of Broadmead some information of the way Transvaal developments were going. The gold was booming and a friend had told him that the great person in the mines' combine now was a fellow called Cecil Rhodes—"not a ruffian, mind you, like most of that pioneering lot, but a chap who was at Oxford, they say." Arthur, however, was reticent, though he admitted he knew of Rhodes as a M.L.A. at Cape Town, and one who had sided with the Boers (he thought) against our Bechuanaland settlement.

Eustace, who at first only silently smoked, too shy to proffer his own opinions on landscape art, went to get another cigarette, or a match, and found himself next to Martin Brinsley, the second son (a tall guardsman, who, unlike his rather weakly elder brother, hated army life); and Martin Brinsley introduced him to a pleasant little group of young soldiers or potential soldiers—pleasant in their blunt good looks, well-set-up figures, and eagerness to learn about Africa. They were soon involved in a warm conversation about big-game shooting. Presently in a lull of talk, one rather penetrating yet "appetizing" voice was heard at the opening of what promised to be an amusing story. The speaker was a little man with a big nose and big moustache. It was Augustus Hare, an habitué at Chapelmead, but at present there as bear leader to a Scandinavian Prince. His stories were all-compelling, to all sorts and conditions of men; and even Lord Feenix deigned to be interested in this one which contained an aristocratic ghost and a unique bit of aristocratic scandal. The lady most involved in the scandal—fortunately blameless—was alluded to as "Cousin Eleanor," for Augustus Hare called cousinship

with a very large proportion of the upper middle class and Baronage. The story ended, some one said, "By Jove! Seven-thirty? When do you dine Bletchley?" Bletchley said eight, but father and mother were seldom in the drawing-room till ten minutes after; however, as Prince Carl. . . . They dispersed and dressed for dinner.

Eustace was allotted a very uninteresting young lady to lead to the Banqueting Hall—hearty in build, but with two blue eyes that met inwards in a dizzy squint. She had a resounding laugh which it required only the smallest facetiousness to arouse, yet which by its attraction of attention from surprised diners not acquainted with Lady Hermione Valtravers occasioned her partner some confusion, so that he would have preferred to talk to the grumpy Lady Adeliza on his left. Lady Hermione—the "Hermy" of most of the party—was engaged to marry one of the nice soldierly young men who bore nothing more remarkable than the name of Smith, being the eldest son of a Sir George Smith who had made a great fortune out of mineral waters and was a pillar of the Conservative party—the Liberals beginning to look somewhat to Alcohol for support. Why, with all England to choose a bride in, Captain Smith should have chosen "Hermy" with her squint and her hyena laugh—even though she were the daughter, niece, cousin, and second cousin of all the Peerage—Eustace could not surmise, but he noted subsequently that the marriage took place in due course, that a large family ensued, and that far on into the next century Lord Calverley—for of course his father was made a peer—and Lady Calverley remained a devotedly attached couple. Both laugh and eyes no doubt were treated by specialists who made her in time quite a presentable person.

He was seated at table on the opposite side to Lord Wiltshire (who had Suzanne on his right); but not far away. The table and the circumstances of that dinner (he wrote), though he was afterwards a somewhat frequent guest at Chapelmead, made an ineffaceable impression on his mind; and as the like will probably never again be seen after this disastrous war, I relate pretty fully what he has recorded. They dined at one very long table—the later and cosier fashion of numerous round tables and small parties had not yet come in. The serving men wore severe black or soberly splendid liveries. A perfect orchestra discoursed lovely music perpetually—no jarring breaks in which voices suddenly sounded in ugly bass, treble, contralto and flat baritone; yet the music was

never so loud that you could not talk easily against it. And you felt you were talking to music ; it made the ugliest human voice seem more harmonious, toned every utterance pleasantly save Lady Hermy's hyena laugh, and Lady Adeliza's rattle of drums' appeal of Er-r-robbut ! . . . Next to Lady Wiltshire sat the giant Scandinavian Prince, the unwilling pupil of Augustus Hare. In consequence of his presence, and as he wore his Family Orders, every one entitled to do so wore a decoration or a military medal, Lord Wiltshire for once looked superb in well-cut clothes, with the broad blue ribbon of the Garter across the chest. The women were much bediamonded, and those who were rich had put on magnificent jewels in necklet, bracelet and at the corsage. Every man wore a button-hole of bright or scented flowers. The table was decorated with orchids throughout its length, and between the orchids alternated dishes of strawberries and peaches. The repast itself was of the most exquisite, and the wines matched it. Their bouquet mingled with the strange scents of orchids and the savour of fruit.

Eustace was consoled for the surly lady on his left (Er-r-robbutting at intervals like a female rogue elephant) and the superficial girl on his right by the occasional interpellations of Lord Wiltshire, some of them obviously prompted by Suzanne. He had to answer questions propounded from across the table and managed to do so at the sacrifice of the nice things on his plate—for the service mustn't wait—about the pet chimpanzi, about cannibalism, and some of his recent adventures. These replies caught the ear of the prince whose conversation with Lady Wiltshire had been wearing a little thin, and the turn of the princely head in his direction brought with it many other eyes.

When Lady Wiltshire rose, the Prince at once offered his arm, so by some electric signal of tact every other gentleman escorted his lady to the great doors of the banqueting hall, bowing over their beringed hands ; and then returned to the table. Lord Wiltshire crossed to his wife's place and signalled to Eustace to sit on the other side of the Prince, thus displacing Lord Feenix who gave him one glint which spoke of a suddenly realized enmity between them ; after which he turned his full attention on Sir Barnet Skettles, an old ambassador, who had last represented Great Britain at the Scandinavian Court. The Prince of Scandinavia preferred, it seemed, to talk French, and Eustace was fluent in that language, with Lord Wiltshire a little more ponderous, but still quite

able to make one of a trio. Coffee came and cigars. At last they rejoined the ladies, Eustace hoping to retire from his dangerous prominence ; for while these distinctions had procured him the suffrages of some, he felt they had made deadly enemies of others.

Sir Barnet Skettles fastened on to him as they hung about in the drawing-rooms, and opined he would go far with Lord Wiltshire's backing (at these words Lord Aloysius glided by them with a sneer, as much as to say : " *I* overheard, and *won't* I tell father of your presumption "—and Eustace cursed the fussy, officious old diplomat for his predictions). " But," went on Sir Barnet, " it ought to be *Colonial,* me boy, *colonial* ; *that's* what you're cut out for : *great* mistake shoving people into the Diplomatic—'tain't fair to those that are in. 'Sides, to be a—ah—good diplomatist, you must, so to speak, have been brought up in diplomacy, d'you take me ? "

In the smoking-room, more awkward distinction thrust on him ; the Prince, it seemed, bored into gruffness by Augustus Hare and architecture, had a really ardent interest in zoology and thirsted to obtain natural history specimens from Nigeria for the Stockholm Museum. He therefore monopolized Eustace till it was time to go to bed.

Sunday morning :

Eustace was delighted inwardly at hearing that the Prince was to go away with his bear-leader during the morning to visit some other great house in Hertfordshire and then return to London to learn if he were to represent his dynasty at the Jubilee ceremonials. The rest of the House party no doubt felt equally relieved. Those that had had the privilege of princely colloquies were satiate with honour ; those that had not, wished the suspense over of waiting about from one minute to another to know if they were to be presented or not to be presented. They had tired of talking at him, laughing musical laughs at him, playing tennis at him, or strolling in maiden-meditation-fancy-free at him.

Suzanne at breakfast said to Eustace, " Are you bent on going with the Family to service in the Chapel ; or would you like to escort me to a dear little Church there is on the other side of the Park ? John has to have a conference on Colonial Office matters with the Premier." Naturally Eustace opted for the " dear little Church." Whereupon she warned him she would be ready in ten minutes and standing looking at the armour in the gallery—otherwise they might be intercepted.

So having met and departed almost with the flavour of an elopement, Eustace and Suzanne walked swiftly away over peacock-haunted terraces, through low iron gates on the latch, past shrubberies, and slackened not their pace till they were out in the park, and pacing the grass of an avenue fifty feet broad, with half a mile of beeches on either side. There was a right of way, or perhaps no questions were asked of well-behaved pedestrians who used this glorious avenue on Sundays to get to one or other of the Churches or villages; so that respectful persons in black occasionally passed them; but otherwise they were well away from the House-party and free to talk without fear of being overheard by either Lord Aloysius or the obnoxious tutor.

Suzanne, realizing this, indicated a prone beech trunk and said: "My tailor-made won't suffer. Let's sit in the shade for a spell. If we feel inclined we can go on later and look for that church. I only said at a guess there must be one in that direction. If we find it, well and good; we can say we've been there supposing any one has the impertinence to question us. It is a sweet morning but rather hot—in any case I must remember to be back in time to change into smarter garments before lunch, because I believe some local celebrities are coming on purpose to see the Prince. They'll be disappointed to find him gone! *You* must be brought forward instead. . . . Didn't it strike you he might have stayed if *only* he could have shaken off Augustus Hare? . . . Augustus is the watch-dog appointed by his Lutheran Mamma to see her boy doesn't get into mischief. And it seems he goes tearing about the country trying to shake him off with sheer fatigue. . . . Dear little person, Augustus really is. We have him down at Tewkesbury, and I'm never tired of his stories; but he seems the last sort of bear-leader to suit a Scandinavian prince, who, when he isn't with the Queen or at a race meeting would much rather be sitting in Bella Delorme's dressing-room—don't blush!—I can see it through the tan—than in one of Augustus's cathedrals. Though I understand Bella's becoming quite respectable and rangée now. . . . Have you been to any Second Adventist Church since you came back? No? I'm not surprised. People like you and me seem to have outgrown definite religion and it only bores us with its unreality. Of course the generality of folk haven't the *least* idea of astronomy. There's Aloysius Brinsley. I don't suppose he learnt any at Eton or Balliol. It was father who put me on to learning a little about the stars. He said when he went

to sea as a lad. . . . Doesn't it make you almost *sick* on a fine night to look *up* and *up* and seem to see them in perspective, system beyond system; and to realize that the Milky Way—which I think looks exactly like a torn wreath of tulle with diamonds entangled in it—is made up of *thousands* and thousands of suns?"

Eustace. "Yes; and then the next morning when all that's out of sight, to take up your newspaper and read what Parliament is wrangling about or what the clergy are debating in Convocation. And does it ever occur to you all the same, how peculiarly we are situated for finding out all about the Universe? If we'd been developed in Venus, for example, we should never have been able to see through the clouds; therefore we should have been like the clergy here, like the people of the Middle Ages, like Aloysius: really convinced that the planet we lived on was *the* Universe, the *ne plus ultra.* Or supposing in our evolution we hadn't worked up our eyes—supposing they were only like the eyes of invertebrates—or even I dare say most mammals or birds; and we couldn't see the stars at all?—But I agree with you a starry night makes one *sick*—with our utter insignificance—and yet—— Have you ever read Winwood Reade. No? I thought not—well, *do* read him. He gives one a ray of hope at the end. We may be—he thinks—the grain of mustard seed—a something that may grow to enormous proportions, with this earth as a jumping-off place."

Suzanne. "Well: *I* have a night soul and a day soul. I suffer frightfully from Weltschmerz when I look at the night sky; and then I wake up in my comfortable bed next morning and Blandine brings me my tea and my letters, and Carinthia—she's my youngest girl—comes in and kisses me, and the sun streams in and the mignonette smells good in the window boxes——

"Now to-day, in this sunshine and with the prospect of a good lunch and some Club croquet in the afternoon—I hate lawn tennis—I am too old for it—I feel all's right with the world, whether God is or is not in his Heaven—Heigh ho! I suppose we must all do our best, and not be unkind to any one. . . .

"And now, let's walk on farther and look out for that spire. . . . Aren't the fallow deer beautiful with their dappled coats—I like the spotted ones so much better than the plain. The bucks have got the velvet still on the antlers. We have no deer at Deerhurst, in spite of its name; the park is too

small; but the gardens are perfectly beautiful, though the trees are not so tall as here.

"Do you know I feel as though we had known each other for *years*; as though we had met ever so long ago. Yet I have only seen you twice—now and a fortnight ago at our annual dinner—rather a wearisome and played-out business, only father and mother cling to it so. But I remember ever so far back—your mother coming to see my mother at Clapham Park—and then seven years ago at Onslow Square—one Sunday——"

Eustace. "Yes. Do you know I have a letter of hers telling me all about it—I should like to show it to you—I know she says at the end you will in some way be led to see the Truth and become an Adventist—dear old mother. You can't think how she felt your kindness——"

Suzanne. "Did she? But I really was rather drawn to her; and she repeated things to me out of your letters, that I thought so interesting. Tell me: are you married or engaged?"

Eustace. "Neither."

Suzanne. "Didn't you once run away with Bella Delorme? I suppose you know she is really Sir James Tudell's sister! I can't bear that man, and when he comes down to see us I can't resist sometimes asking him if he has seen his 'clever sister' lately, and praising her in her different parts. Well: *did* you ever run away with her?"

Eustace. "Oh! nothing but a sudden infatuation, a flirtation—and afterwards I went with her and her husband to Paris and Monte Carlo—perhaps not a very wise thing to do; but Bella is a very good sort, and so is—William—if you can believe it. They are nice pagans—though if it comes to that, I don't suppose I am anything else—without the 'nice' of course. I did want to marry a girl once—badly—but I arrived from Africa to find her engaged to some one else."

Suzanne. "I see. But I think it would be a pity if you didn't marry—and—and have children. Children, after all, are a pledge of continuity—I suppose—and yet they're often a disappointment. Mine are fine specimens, all but dear little Carinthia. But except Carinthia I really do not think I love them—not passionately. And I always dread, *because* Carry is so unlike the others *and* so dear to me *and* so fairy-like—Mother always says she's just like a little sister of mine who died when she was ten—that she won't live long. There

is some weakness of the spine. . . . How talkative I am, and how little you say ! "

Eustace. " Well, I've not got much to talk about—except Africa. I know you'll go on to say, ' Oh, *do* tell me all about Africa.' "

Suzanne. " I shouldn't be so silly ; besides I know lots about it myself. It is not for nothing, Sir, that I'm a Secretary of State's wife ! As soon as John was given the Colonial Office I bought large roller maps and had them hung up in my writing-room at Tewkesbury—what the local builder always calls ' 'Er Leddyship's Boodore.' I'm much more interested in the Colonies than he is. I look out delightful little fragments of islands and read up all about them. ' Crown Colony ' sounds so jewel-like, don't you think ? I always feel if the Queen asked me if I'd like an Order to remember the Jubilee by I should reply, ' Oh Ma'am, *would* you mind giving me a tiny Crown Colony instead ? ' And then I'd borrow some nice person's yacht—we're not rich enough to have one—and go out there and be awfully sweet to the dear brown people and remit all their taxes or offer to take them in coconuts and sumptuous sea-shells, and macaws. I think everyone who is well enough off ought to keep macaws *in*doors and peacocks *out* of doors. The colour is so good for the disposition and the screams are quite steadying to the nerves. I've brought up my children on it. Carinthia never starts at anything now. But John, who is not always accommodating in small things, made me give the macaws to the Zoo, dear things. . . . Now : there's the spire—positively—so back we turn—and here's a keeper . . . so I'll ask him. . . . (*To keeper.*) Can we get back to the House if we take this path ? And keep to the left, always ? Thank you *so* much. If I'd been born in the Lower Middle Class instead of the Upper, I should have wanted to marry a keeper ; they're always so handsome and romantic, and seldom live long enough to be aged and boresome. . . . They die in a scuffle with poachers, poor things. Or they're hung at the County Gaol for shooting a wicked baronet in a velveteen coat who has pretended to be an artist and betrayed their one personable daughter. Will these clichés on the stage *ever* die out ? What are your plans after we go away from here ? "

Eustace. " Why of course London till after the Jubilee—and then—well : I suppose I shall go to my brother for a few days. He's got a farm in Warwickshire—and then—abroad p'raps——"

Suzanne. "*We* must be in London till the end of July—Parliament and so on. *Then* we must go to Scotland to kill grouse: but in September we shall be back at Tewkesbury—Deerhurst Park, you know—for the partridge shooting. John is strictly orthodox in ruling his life's ways. But his work will take him back to London in October. You must come to us at the beginning of September, whether you are or are not 'a gun.' I've a hundred things I want to discuss with you . . . each Crown Colony in turn; and what our policy is to be in Africa. . . . And don't forget my party at the C.O. on the 1st!"

Eustace. "You are too kind: and *really* and *truly*, this has been the jolliest talk I've had for ever so long. . . . I—I—can't tell you how I've enjoyed it. It's quite braced me up. I got rather hipped when I came back. Every one seems to know me in West Africa now, even if they dislike me. But here in London—it was awfully good of your father to ask me the instant I got back—but my mother is dead, I've very few friends left—like an ass I quarrelled with the Lacrevys because their daughter married young Tudell and I'm ashamed now to go and call after behaving as I did; and even Broadmead . . . well, he doesn't seem quite the same as he was three years ago——"

Suzanne. "Poor Arthur! I've fancied for some time that he's awfully gone on a girl he can't marry, or some married woman. And yet he is keen as mustard on what he calls 'Imperial' Questions—much keener than John. They're at it hammer and tongs this morning. Lord Wiltshire went to early communion at eight, so as to be free to do business all the forenoon. . . . He's rather like a Roman Catholic in his religion; goes to church any day and every day for a short spell, and lets us play at any mortal thing we like on Sundays—Well, I know he asked John down, with you and Broadmead, to settle this Niger business. Those three are going to have their argument this morning and you're to be called into council this afternoon. So be on the look-out. Don't go wandering off with that lovely creature Hermione Valtravers. You must hang about until you get an intimation that his Lordship would like to show you the park or something of the kind. . . .

"But I'm simply babbling this morning. . . . What were you saying? That you were so lonely? I *quite* understand; that is why you ought to meet some nice girl and get married; but *en attendant*, come and stay with us at Tewkesbury;

and you know you can drop in every now and again at 52 Brook Street. You must come to dinner twice at least, twice to lunch on weekdays, and twice to lunch on the Sundays when we don't go out of town, and four times to tea. That won't look too marked."

Eustace. "Well, may I be frank? I can't help thinking Lord Feenix doesn't quite like me—I don't know why. Perhaps. . . ."

Suzanne. "John? Oh, but my *dear* friend, he's *always* like that! I used to cry my eyes out when we were engaged thinking every day he'd changed his mind and wanted to be off with the bargain but was afraid dear Grandmama would curse him in a terribly majestic way, and leave to some one else the Feenix miniatures. John is *always* like that. It's the eye-glass. I've got used to it. He has his limitations. I'm sure you must have yours. And even I am not absolutely perfect, though I'm certainly one of the best women I know. But all that mustn't worry you. My friends soon get used to those speechless stares and his tiresome ways of not answering, and give themselves up wholly to me.

"Besides I want a companion whilst they are out shooting. All my children follow the guns except Carry; and you and I can plan out the fate of Crown Colonies and see what products we can develop and what duties we can raise. Then I'll draw up notes for John. And he'll think the ideas were his own—otherwise he would never carry them out. I'll drop a hint to Lord W.—Suggest that we should ask you down to Tewkesbury in September so that John may pick your brains. He's a dear old thing, Lord Wiltshire: the only man with whom I could elope. He seems to me a sort of Merlin, and I, like a rather elderly Vivien . . . I'm thirty-four. . . . How old are you, by the bye? You must be pretty near my age? . . ."

Eustace. "I'm thirty-seven. . . . I'm sure I look it! . . ."

Suzanne (scrutinizing him). "Ye-es. But not *more* than thirty-seven. Paul begins to look his age, though I still think he's the handsomest and in some ways the nicest man I have ever met. Poor Paul! he has not had a completely happy marriage. How few of us have! His wife, Diana, is an absolutely good woman, and strikingly handsome in a cold way. She seems really fond of Paul—rather more like a mother might be, not like a wife. Paul's wife ought to adore him like mother does father. I can't help thinking of late

Paul has had some love affair which worries him. He began to behave so oddly a few years ago, getting quite stage-struck and fussing over Shakespeare revivals. People rather coupled his name with Lucilla Smith because he was on the syndicate that brought her out; and now they say he's constantly going down to Cambridge. Not about Shakespeare—he gets angry now at the *least* allusion to the Elizabethan dramatists—but about some 'ology or other. Lucilla Smith's mother lives near Cambridge and that odious press man—'Bax'—had a paragraph the other day about 'City Potentates as Godfathers' which I'm sure was a cut at Paul; but whose godfather he is, I can't think, unless it's Lucilla Smith's little boy. Can it be . . . ? But really I mustn't go one better than the unspeakable 'Bax.' I'm only rambling because you're lonely and Paul is lonely—or seems so; and you ought to have much the same tastes—so do go and make friends with him, will you? Don't be put off by Diana. You are almost our relation, you know. You share all the dark family secrets, though the present generation has almost forgotten the name of Carker! . . . Here we are; and it's been almost a monologue. . . ."

After lunch, Lord Wiltshire asked Eustace if he had ever seen the Monks' fishponds. The history of the world might have been slightly changed, perhaps, if he had replied, "Yes, and that once was quite enough"; but never having been at Chapelmead before, and descrying Arthur Broadmead lingering on the Terrace feeding a peacock with mixed biscuits, he hastened to say that nothing would interest him more. Accordingly the three of them started, Lord Wiltshire being at his most debonnaire and telling some excellent stories concerning peacocks and Lord Beaconsfield, until they were in the great avenue where Eustace had spent an hour in the morning listening to Suzanne. "And now," said Lord Wiltshire, "that I am tolerably out of the hearing of my excellent tenantry, though so quaint is our national education that I might shout out strings of African names and they would not be a bit the wiser—now let us settle the fate of the Niger. It is, I may observe, a curious anomaly that the future weal or woe of millions of black and brown people—should you call the Fulas brown?—(Eustace: "On an average, yes, my lord.")—Well, then, of millions of black and brown people is being determined in a Hertfordshire beech avenue in Latitude 51 something, North, where there hasn't been a ghost

of a palm for—what shall we say? You evolutionists are so liberal in time—Two million years. I suppose it is all due in some way to the Glacial periods which made us what we are, able to lay down the law to the coloured peoples who kept snug in the tropics while we were battling against the cold. And now to business. We've settled—more or less—our frontier with the Cameroons, and as regards the French ——"

To go farther would be to be indiscreet, even though the actors in this play are dead and buried. The time is not yet arrived for writing the true life of Lord Wiltshire and his plans for the British Empire. It is sufficient to say that from that memorable walk under the beech trees of Chapelmead, Eustace derived the instructions he was to put in force in succeeding years, and Arthur Broadmead considered that the Niger policy being virtually settled he could now give himself up to studying what might be done in South Africa, Central Africa and East Africa, to map out the vast British bands across the Dark Continent, from South to North and from East to West.

He in his turn had originally been inspired by Edwin Arnold, a great maker of phrases, Eustace had lent a hand and a suggestion; and between them all they had—Lord Wiltshire nodding the assent of a god—evolved the stimulating phrase: "From the Cape to Cairo and from Cairo to Old Calabar."

This was the watch-word. Meantime, much had to be arranged, and Eustace might, as a preliminary, be employed at home or in going to foreign capitals to discuss frontier arrangements; while Arthur Broadmead, and Eustace under his directions, prepared the public mind through the press and the Geographical Society for the coming expansion.

"You see," said Lord Wiltshire, "we always have to consider the Treasury. The Treasury is an admirable institution and I am the last man to decry it. But the Treasury is a little arriéré in its education. Its heads of departments—of the spending departments—are dear creatures and most intelligent, but the knowledge on which they have been brought up is—well—(turning to Eustace,) it doesn't include your particular fad of economic botany, a science which I confess has been a weakness of my own ever since I looked at the Flora of Natal. The Treasury is rather stubborn, I warn you, about spending money on African adventures, but if the

Treasury sees those ventures warmly supported in *The Times* and the *Spectator*, they will think Providence must have decided we should go in for them.

"By the bye, Mr. Morven, you will be pleased to hear the Stationery Office—though why the Stationery Office, I cannot say—are to be authorized by the Treasury to complete the *Flora of Tropical Africa* you are so interested in. And now let us seek Lady Wiltshire's tea-table. . . . Yes: that is the new game 'Golf,' carefully spelt g-o-l-f and as carefully pronounced by all who know, 'goff.' Why is it that the English and the Scotch should be so fond of knocking or kicking balls of various sizes, and apparently not so the Irish or the Welsh? There's a problem for your Ethnological Societies!"

[They never saw the Monks' fishponds, by the bye.]

In the evening followed another splendid banquet which, however, was more intimate (there was no band) and more generally merry in its conversation. And this time Eustace took in a delightfully witty woman, the only unmarried daughter of the Wiltshires, who poked fun at Perceval Dombey's poems. This most incongruous brother of Suzanne and Paul had rather fastened himself on to Aloysius Brinsley, though the latter was ten years younger. But both had an ecclesiastical turn of mind, though their faith or unfaith of the moment might be as the poles asunder. Both agreed in being resolutely in a minority; directly the masses came over to their precepts they abandoned them, and preached some other priggish heresy or orthodoxy. Moreover, Percy Dombey, though he wrote morbid poetry which became delicious, super-fatted nonsense in some verses, delivered himself of clever criticism and was the Editor of the *Sunday Review*, a weekly journal supported by members of the Brinsley clan.

And after dinner, with an interval for digestion, they played charades. This was an amusement of which the Chapelmead family never tired. It gave them some satisfaction for preserving a staid demeanour in public. Lady Enid, the unmarried daughter, and Cooey, her aunt, were jointly mistresses of the robes, repositories of the make-up, the wigs and all the paraphernalia you could desire for informal private theatricals. Generally under the convenient term of "Charade" a sort of impromptu revue of the week's or the month's doings in the great world would be given. On this occasion however Lady Enid decided they should imitate (with political allusions) scenes from a revived success of Bella Delorme's—the

Pride of the Harem. Eustace was the Sultan of Morocco, and looked (it was said) strikingly handsome in that rôle. Suzanne was the Pride of the Harem, and Cooey was a naughty sultana who had to be " put away " for her flirtations with Lord Randolph Churchill (visiting the Court of Morocco, and played with an immense moustache by Lady Enid,) but who proved impossible to kill, though they tried drowning, bastinadoing and beheading. Arthur Broadmead within the limits of decorum repeated the part of Arthur Roberts in the extravaganza—or at least as much as he could remember. The improvisation demanded the readiest wit ; " Cooey," however, had only to scream to move her audience and her fellow-players to a laughter that pardoned all default of words ; and Eustace when at a loss talked very real Arabic, which gave a rich local flavour to the scene. Nearly every youthful guest was in the charades as principal or super ; and the scrimmage induced such good fellowship that every one called Eustace, " Yusy," and he called all the other men by their Christian or their nick-names. In short, he felt when he went to bed that night as though he had made twenty-four inseparable friends. Yet in most cases circumstances parted them ; and if the Duke of Derwentwater and Lord Calverley let their thoughts range back to a June week-end party at Chapelmead in the year of the first Jubilee, they would have some difficulty in recalling the man who played the Sultan of Morocco so uncommonly well.

Monday morning, however, brought no decrease of friendliness. Even Lord Feenix was cordial or as near cordial as he could be. He came and sat next Eustace at breakfast and said : " Suzanne tells me she's asked you to come to us at Tewkesbury in September. I hope you will. Any date from the First onwards. Don't bother to bring a gun—I dare say you have left yours in Africa ; I can always lend you one. And of course we can take advantage of your being there to discuss the future status of the Niger Territories, for naturally the F.O. will hand it over to us some day."

After this week-end at Chapelmead, London at first—even Hankey's Mansions and St. James's Park—seemed a little flat. Lord Wiltshire, as he descended from the saloon carriage and walked away with a little bodyguard of servants and railway officials to his brougham, suddenly became unapproachable and aloof. The rest went their several ways with nod and smile ; even Suzanne looked harassed at the thought of a day filled with many preparations, a smart lunch and a big

dinner-party of her own giving. She gave Eustace, however, the approximate dates for the lunches, dinners and afternoon visits to Brook Street, between June and the end of July, and waved her hand in rather an abstracted farewell.

CHAPTER XVI

AT TEWKESBURY

WHEN Eustace left the train at Tewkesbury he realized there were other guests besides himself proceeding to Deerhurst Park. The same train had also brought Lady Enid Brinsley, Lucilla Smith and Susan Knipper-Totes; besides a very pretty, quietly dressed young lady to whom Eustace—knowing the others enough to shake hands—bowed with grave punctiliousness. To her confusion; since she was only Lady Enid's maid, and you were supposed in 1887 and for long afterwards to be unconscious of the existence of domestic servants unless you had need of their services. Lady Enid, however, did not look displeased at his naïveté and greeted him in a very friendly fashion.

They all entered the well-appointed dark-blue omnibus which had come to meet them, with its pair of dark grey horses, dark-blue-liveried coachman and footman; and were driven to Deerhurst Park.

The house was a handsome, stone, Tudor mansion, with some early Georgian accretions in out-buildings not too incongruous owing to the same use of stone. It was approached through beautiful woods of yews and oaks, chestnuts and beeches and unusually large hawthorns. The eastern side and main entrance seemed a little overshaded and sombre as the trees rose up behind it. But when you passed round or through to the west front the view from a succession of stone balustraded terraces and Italian gardens over the broad Severn valley was one of the regal views of England. In the far north-west could be seen the blue peaks of the Malvern Hills.

Suzanne and her children were there to greet them. And as the day was warm tea was being served on the first terrace under a gay awning to keep off the sun. Edith Molyneux, a rather leggy girl of thirteen, and her brother Victor rushed noisily to greet Lady Enid and only acknowledged perfunctorily the other arrivals. Walter, like his brother, in cricketing flannels, made up to Eustace because he could tell him

about big game shooting. Carinthia, fragile and shy, clung to her mother's skirts, and was with some difficulty induced to follow Walter and Victor with cakes and sandwiches, whilst they handed cups of tea.

"Enid, dear, we've put you in the south wing, but I don't think you will be too hot. This lovely weather can't go on much longer. Your maid is in a dressing-room next to you; and not far off is the great Jos Choselwhit. He doesn't arrive with his secretary till after six. Lucilla and Susan! it was too sweet of you to come at such short notice. You are in the north wing, but your rooms face west and have lovely views. Mr. Morven, you on the other hand face east, which is rather appropriate, because Africa *does* lie rather more east than west, doesn't it? But when you've rested enough after your tea you shall all see your quarters, and if you violently object there may be still time to change. We haven't got a large party staying in the house: only besides yourselves Mr. Choselwhit, his secretary, and Sir James Tudell. . . ."

As though summoned by the quoting of his name, Sir James at that moment appeared coming out of the house, dressed in Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, against a background of Lord Feenix and a small crowd of young and middle-aged men, all similarly costumed and back from partridge shooting: tired, red-faced (except Feenix) and thirsty.

Much coming and going of men-servants and additions to the tea-table of other tables carrying whisky and soda, lemons, sandwiches, and substantial plum cakes. Edith Molyneux's governess—a clever-looking Frenchwoman—Edith herself, and Lady Enid all take a hand in pouring out tea; and the two footmen devote themselves chiefly to the whisky-and-sodas sheepishly asked for by the more tenant-farmer-like of the shooters.

Much haw-hawing and ha-haing. Every one talks at once . . . dogs, guns, birds, crops, 'straordinary good shootin' of Lord Feenix, devilish flukes of young Robson—come now!—rotten bad misses of the men who haven't yet got their eye in—or their hand in; this new powder, that new gun of Purdy's; lovely views, splendid harvest: "D'you think so?—but wretched root crops . . . this Hessian fly . . . but that goes more for the wheat? I know . . . still. . . . When are you goin' to wake up the Gloucestershire railways, Sir James?"

"How de do, Mr. Morven?" (Lord Feenix can't shake hands because of his cup and saucer and slice of cake.) "Glad you were able to come to us. . . . Brought your gun? . . .

Because if not, I've got plenty to choose from. . . . Well, you must come out with us to-morrow. *You* don't shoot, I suppose, Miss Knipper-Totes ? Waitin' till you get the Vote and wear the breeches, eh ? By the bye, I suppose you saw we 'postponed' the great question in the House of Lords before we rose. . . . Funny, Wiltshire should be so in favour of it. . . .

"Yes, Choselwhit is coming here for a few days' visit—So you can tackle *him* about suffrage. . . . I believe he's to go over to Canada in November for the boundary dispute." (To a shooting squire.) "Oh, *he's* all right . . . bound to come over to us . . . can't rat all at once, don't you know ? He cuts a caper now and then . . . brought down our majority to forty-two just before the House o' Commons rose . . . made a dead-set at 'Old Morality.'"

"W. H. Smith bores us to tears, sometimes," said the squire, who had been introduced to Lucilla. "No relation of yours, I suppose ? . . . But surely, it's a stage name ? 'Pon my soul, thought it was. A dev'lish artful disguise . . . always wanted to go on the stage myself, just for the lark o' takin' another name . . . get so tired o' y'r own. Must say I've enjoyed your acting—'low me to say so—awfully. Never took much stock in Shakespeare before . . . thought his funniments rather laboured, don't yer know ?"

Eustace presently found himself strolling away from the babel, down the stone steps from terrace to terrace, with Lady Enid. They entered a dark tunnel of thick box-trees, spangled inside with yellow sunshine, where the level beams pierced the small glossy leaves. . . . Eustace snuffed up the civet-like aroma of the box with keen enjoyment. Lady Enid talked of the charades at Chapelmead and how well Eustace had played the Sultan of Morocco. Her aunt, "Cooey," had taken such a liking to him. P'raps he would come and see them again before he left for Africa ? . . .

"I believe I'm to put in some months at home working at the F.O."

"Oh, that's splendid ! You must come and see us in Piccadilly. We are generally in town in November and after January. My father doesn't hunt, of course, and my brothers don't care about it. . . . Father's always dilating on the tyranny of the fox. . . . Perhaps we'd better go and see those rooms Suzanne talked about. You're some sort of connection of hers, aren't you ?" (Eustace explained.)

Near the house he was waylaid by Walter Molyneux, who

wanted information about wild beasts, and volunteered in exchange to show him his room.

At dinner that night he took in the French governess, Mlle. de Launay, a charming woman well into the thirties, hair turning grey with some buried sorrow, but full of wit and savour. Suzanne declared she was such a hermit that it was only the chance of sitting next to Eustace that had tempted her to join their dinner party. (Partly true, but another reason was the dropping out of an expected dinner guest and the worry over the thirteen superstition.)

In the Library, as they were paired off, Eustace had caught a sight of Choselwhit, the ex-cabinet minister who had split off from the Liberal-Radical party over Home Rule. He was tall, spare, rather distinguished-looking, wore immovably an eye-glass and had a long pointed nose and an air of quizzical imperturbability. His private secretary (parliamentary, unpaid) was a Captain Westlock, grandson of a law lord: good-looking in a blunt featured, Saxon, military style, a young M.P. who had left the Army for Imperial politics. . . .

Suzanne who had as a Minister's wife to observe a strict order of precedence was not taken in to dinner by Choselwhit (though he seemed to expect this and was sulky when introduced to Miss Susan Knipper-Totes as an alternative,) but by Lord Algernon Verisopht of the Foreign Office, who with his wife had come over from their place six miles distant. Other guests of the neighbourhood were a Mr. John Harmon, M.P. for the Tewkesbury Division, and his wife.

The sight of the dinner table elicited cries of admiration, and some use of lorgnettes and eye-glasses. It was lit up with " fairy lights " among the flowers, then quite a novelty. The fairy lights formed the opening topic for quite five minutes, over the soup and sherry. Then they talked in a harmonious gabble (except that Tudell's voice occasionally betrayed plebeian raucousness when he rallied the vivacious Bella Harmon, and that Choselwhit and Feenix fell dumb for five minutes at a time). They talked of the things of the day, the week, the season. Of the bye-elections the Government had lost at Northwich, Bridgeton, and Spalding. . . . What did it portend? . . . Nothing, Lord Feenix opined. . . . Had any one—asked Mr. John Harmon (a Liberal)—seen the account of that absurd incident in a North Hunts election campaign where the village constable was such a bigoted Tory that he wielded his rattle all the time the Radical candidate was speaking and so prevented his being heard? Some

one had asked a question about it before the House rose, but . . . Then Sir James Tudell (who wanted to get into Parliament as a Conservative) asked who it was had nosed out that ancient sinecure of Master of the King's Hawks and frightened Goschen into promising it should be abolished. It had become hereditary and the poor Duke was so hard hit one way and another that he'd actually miss the three or four hundred a year and pickings. For his part he thoroughly agreed with keepin' up all the old customs. . . . To avert a falling out with Harmon whose eye began to glitter Suzanne said: "Talking of old and new customs, how did they all view this introduction of steamers into the Venice canals? Wouldn't it spoil Venice altogether and perhaps smudge the Palace fronts? At any rate a great deal of fuss about it was being made in the papers. . . ." Lucilla, Mlle. de Launay and Lady Enid expressed their horror at the sacrilege; but Sir James Tudell, Choselwhit and Lord Feenix were for progress and modernity in such matters. Perhaps the coal smoke would kill the mosquitoes. Presently some one threw the question of Sir Edward Hamley into the arena. Why this unrelenting hatred of the War Office towards an able reformer? (asked John Harmon). Sphinx-like silence and use of eyeglass from Lord Feenix.

Susan Knipper-Totes had a passage of arms with Choselwhit. The Government of India had after twenty years of siege from Florence Nightingale consented with ponderous grace to allow the presence of white women nurses in the military and civil European hospitals of India; but had intimated that if these nurses wanted a change for rest and recuperation to the Hill Stations, they must depend on private charity. Didn't Mr. Choselwhit think this sounded very mean? European *men* in India were not treated like this. (Mr. Choselwhit poked his long nose into his plate and said it was no business of his.) Lord Algy expressed himself greatly pained. Perhaps if we knew all?—Suzanne said if we knew all, we should only disbelieve in male government more than ever; and called down the table to Lucilla to know if she had been acting with Mary Anderson, and whether Mary was as lovely off the stage as on.

There were some flickering sentences, about the cheapness of woman labour, passing between Susan K.-T. and Captain Westlock, who was going to inquire into the American phase of that question when he went to Canada with Mr. Choselwhit.

Lady Algy, who had had to give up riding owing to a bygone accident, had started one of these new tricycles in the country and sometimes rode as much as four miles!—two miles into the market town and back! Mrs. Harmon had read Mr. Sturmey's new bicycle handbook and believed the time might come when women would wear knickerbockers and ride bicycles. But even Suzanne thought that was going too far, and the rest of the table agreed. John Harmon said he would take jolly good care Bella didn't attempt anything so foolhardy.

Bicycles led somehow to bumps and bruises and the ridiculous song that was tickling all London: "Two Lovely Black Eyes." Lady Enid admitted she had got a cousin to take her to the music hall where it was sung, and had seen Lord Randolph in the stalls. The song had been dragged into some extravaganza in which Bella Delorme was acting. . . . Mrs. Harmon thought that actress getting very passée, and lamented that her own Christian name was now so prominently represented on the boards by blowsy persons. Sir James Tudell frowned and looked down into his plate. Suzanne, guessing the reason, hastened to ask him if on his recent trip to Constantinople he had seen anything of the Prince with the Nose, Ferdinand of Coburg, who was shilly-shallying about accepting the throne of Bulgaria . . . he had sent for his Mamma, the Orleanist Princess. to decide him. . . . Mlle. de Launay placed in pretty English (though she talked French with Eustace and Lady Enid) some amusing anecdotes about the Orleans Princes, M. Clémenceau, and General Boulanger. . . . This gave occasion to Sir James to compliment her on her mastery of English—rather clumsily. After that they were talking of the recent agitation in the papers over the increasing employment of German clerks in England because Englishmen wouldn't learn modern languages . . . Susan K.-T. said "couldn't," because the public schools wouldn't let them.

But here Lord Algy, Feenix, Tudell, all defended the public schools as imparting a—a—something, don't you know. . . . Eh? . . . I mean . . . er . . . well, altogether different to, *superior* to a mere *waiter's* accomplishments. "Of course" —with a bow to Mlle. de Launay—"we all ought to know French . . . more or less . . . what?" John Harmon said much travel had made him very sceptical about the advantages of a classical education, but. . . . Then more confused interlocution; and the final dominant note was the insistence of

Choselwhit on the need for arming and fortifying our coaling stations. Lord Algy said " was this really necessary when our fleet, you know, our fleet hadn't an equal ? " Then Suzanne catching Lady Algy's eye rose, and after the women had passed out the men separated into two coteries—Feenix, Tudell, Choselwhit in one ; Verisopht, Eustace, Harmon, and Westlock in the other ; and discussed politics and finance, Imperialism, sport, telephones and telepathy.

For dinner they had had something like this—

Consommé and Bisque soups ; oysters and turbot or Wye salmon ; vol-au-vent of chicken and mushrooms ; sweetbreads ; small rounds of beefsteak with cunning adjuncts and a bewildering variety of vegetables ; partridges with a hot wine sauce ; ice pudding or pine-apple jelly ; a savoury compounded of twenty ingredients ; pine apple cream ices ; and a dessert of all the fruits and nuts in season. They had drunk or sipped sherry, hock, champagne, Romanée-Conti and Port, and a liqueur with the coffee. And yet in those days one never heard of appendicitis ! . . .

What did they do in the evening ? Bridge had not been introduced by five years at least ; whist was too dull ; Nap or Loo were too vulgar for Lord Feenix's house. The men—all but Eustace and Verisopht—played pool in the billiard room. Suzanne in the drawing-room was a better executant than any pianola and played every kind of music : Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Sullivan, and the new comic opera, " Dorothy." Lady Enid sang by request, " Two lovely Black Eyes," in a fine contralto. Lucilla recited two or three things —unasked, led into it by the music . . . and Eustace sat silent, intensely enjoying it all.

* * * * *

Out with the guns. An early breakfast. Eustace in Norfolk jacket, knickerbockers and stockings, with his tanned face and close-clipped beard looks sportsmanlike ; and, glancing round the other shooters covertly, is relieved to find they are dressed much as he is. Lord Feenix is eye-glassy and tiresomely silent. Sir James is blusterous and talks loudly of abundance of birds on his own acres. Josiah Choselwhit comes down rather late and has obviously no intention of joining them, has probably never fired a gun in his life. He is dressed with great care as though bound for the House of Commons. Indeed during the whole of this stay in the country never once dons country costume. Eustace even has the impression that he goes out in a tall hat. Westlock

however makes up for his chief's solecism by his zest in sport and his appropriate tweeds.

They start. Suzanne, Lady Enid, Lucilla and Susan K.-T. are to come out with the lunch to the keeper's cottage at High Knoll. The morning is delicious. There is a freshness in the air, a laugh on the face of Nature, the mirth that mocks at a coming decline. The sun is hot and all the ground vegetation and stubble is a-glint with the morning dew.

Eustace had vaguely imagined partridge shooting was an affair of two or three sportsmen (as in old prints) who walked through bulbous root-crops and were preceded by pointer dogs, speckled and white, and followed by keepers with retrievers. When the pointers pointed you were on the alert, and when a partridge or a covey got up you let fly. But he found that this method had been set aside by all progressive land-owners like Lord Feenix, in favour of the drive, and really it was very like a disciplined military exercise. They marched out into a large pasture field for cattle and faced a stiff hawthorn hedge or in places a loose stone wall. This separated the grass from a vast field of root-crops. Far away on the other side of the mangold wurzels were keepers, beaters, and dogs driving the partridges towards the hedge and the shooters. Over the birds would come, whirring with startling cries. Then you fired and hoped for the best. Not only partridges came but land-rails and big fieldfares and an occasional plover. Each " gun " was posted almost mathematically so many yards apart and in sight of his fellows. When the drive was over the keepers came round with their retrievers and picked up the fallen birds. Eustace with a good gun, a practised eye and the luck of the novice had a sufficient number of birds to his credit when they right-about-faced and marched across the turf to the opposite side of the pasture. Again spaced, they awaited the driving of another root-crop or stubble-field. Once more the driven birds that had escaped the first volleys came flying back and yielded their heavy toll to the firing, loading and refiring. Then a march to fresh fields and fresh drives, the whole thing becoming a boresome drill to Eustace, vastly different from the sport of Africa with its variegated range from guinea-fowl to giraffe.

At last, the luncheon hour drew nigh, and abandoning a quasi-military formation they walked at ease to a pretty group of buildings known as High Knoll, on a hillock, partly artificial, perhaps some ancient British fort—crested with

pines and beeches, amid which was an old farmstead converted into a headkeeper's residence. In the great barn the lunch was spread, and the ladies in comparatively short skirts, tailor-made, came out to greet them.

Lord Feenix felt bound to congratulate Eustace on his prowess (rather condescendingly, Eustace thought); and Suzanne looked pleased to hear him. James Tudell (albeit, as Eustace knew, only the son of a North London engine-driver) was a rattling good shot and had been long inured to all the tricks of dog and gun. He was after all of country stock, the grandson of some peasant-poacher, turned navvy when the making of canals began to link up town and country.

In the afternoon the same manœuvres were practised. The shooting was a little wilder but the bags were good; and when at length Lord Feenix gave the signal for return to tea (a brake sent from the stables saved them the final walk) Eustace inwardly vowed that having satisfied honour and convention he would cry off any more partridge shooting for the remainder of his stay.

* * * * *

"Come and play croquet with us this morning, as you won't join the guns," said Suzanne. (On Sunday morning they had walked to Deerhurst Church, which was pre-Norman, and attended service "to set a good example to the tenants." On Sunday afternoon they had fed the peacocks above, and the swans below, had lounged through the lovely gardens, visited the stables, read odd volumes of *Punch* in the Library, ate, yawned, talked. On Monday Suzanne took them into Tewkesbury to see the Abbey Church and the beautiful old timber houses.)

"Croquet is reviving, you know, or probably don't know, since you have been away so long in Africa." So they went to a shaven lawn with stone balustrade-seats round it on the west and north—part of the second terrace—drove away the peacocks, which had lost their tails and looked mean and top-heavy, and played a foursome game with balls that were severely striped "one" or "two" in blue or red. Eustace played with Suzanne, and Lady Enid with Susan K.-T. Lucilla declared she liked tennis, as it kept her figure lissom. So she departed with Edith, Victor and Walter who were demons at that game and despised croquet as too utterly slow and duffing. Carinthia sat on one of the several rugs that were thrown on the stone balustrade seats and looked at the pictures of a fairy story.

Eustace's share in the game was chiefly the making of wild shots which sent his ball from one end of the lawn to the other like an erratic comet having little to do with the orderly progress of the planets. Once in a way he passed through the right hoop like an express train. Despite Suzanne's brilliant tactics as an early rover, the other two partners won their game in an hour's play.

After lunch they all—except the shooters—started in couples to walk down towards the Severn with a vague idea of boating. Suzanne and Eustace converged as it were naturally and found themselves on the shores of a large pond—" I prefer to call it ' The Lake,' " said Suzanne. Here there was a punt and a boathouse from which cushions could be got. And there were swans and mallards, coots and an occasional heron, and great banks of bulrushes. Eustace punted her out amongst the " sudd," as he called it. The swans came swelling and ruffling by with their browny-grey cygnets, angry that there was no tribute of bread.

But the afternoon was golden, as it often used to be in mid-September in pre-war days. The punt got hitched and immobile among the bulrush columns. Suzanne shaded herself with a Japanese umbrella ; Eustace sat down and asked if he might smoke.

Suzanne. " What are you going to do with your life ? What are your ambitions ? How old are you ? "

Eustace. " Last answer first ; I'm thirty-seven as I've told you more than once before. My ambition is to bring as much of Africa as I can under the British flag—just to keep it safe from spoliation, don't you know ? And then—to examine it at my leisure . . . to . . . to find out all its secrets—discover new races or traces of old ones, new birds, new beasts, new insects, to unravel the language affinities . . . lots of unwritten history is locked up in language roots, don't you see ? I'm sure the languages of Africa, like its religions . . . and . . . and the customs will show that the white man has interfered with Africa many times and long ago. . . . Well, *then,* there's all the past of Africa beyond human history. . . . We must find fossils presently which will turn out to be missing links. . . ."

Suzanne. " You mean the missing link, between apes and man ? . . . I remember you were very Darwinian at the Dombey dinner. . . . Feenix didn't quite approve. . . ."

Eustace. " *Lord,* no ! *That* doesn't matter . . . a mere

trifle. We can be cock-sure-certain that Man rose from an ape-ancestor, merely by reasoning from his embryology. The finding of the actual proof is only a detail. No. I meant missing links between reptile and mammal, that are turning up in the South African rocks . . . missing links between fish and amphibians like the Ganoids and the Lung-fishes ; between lemurs and apes. . . . But all this is horribly boring. . . ."

Suzanne. "It isn't. . . ."

Eustace. "I only pour out this to show you what an absorbing interest I take in Africa. . . . Of course, also, I'm not blind to the commerce : far from it : but I want fairness to the natives first and foremost. . . . Why? Because they believe in me and trust me. And I want to put down two accursed things : the Slave trade and the Alcohol trade. . . ."

Suzanne. "So that you don't think for a moment about any European career ? "

Eustace. "? "

Suzanne. "I mean—to be plain-spoken—for we can't talk for ever in this punt, though it *is* an ideal place for confidences—you haven't thought at all of a safer career on this side ? There's no doubt Lord Wiltshire is struck with you. . . . Why don't you propose to Lady Enid ? You might become an Ambassador or a Governor-General. . . ."

Eustace. "Lady Feenix ! "

Suzanne. "*Mister* Morven ! Or rather, *Eustace,* for these formalities shrivel up when one remembers your father's and mother's connection with our shady past, and how your uncle eloped with my step-grandmother . . . or intended to. . . . EUSTACE : can't you see Lady Enid has a liking for you ? She's really not at all bad-looking, and she can't be thirty yet. *Why* she didn't marry years ago, I don't know. . . . But she's very ambitious and hard to please. . . . They say. . . . However, I must keep to the point, and the point is that she means to marry either you or Choselwhit."

Eustace. "! "

Suzanne. "Fact ! At least I put two and two together. She virtually asked herself down here, but whether it was to meet you or Jos. I can't say. Jos. is a widower and every one says he is the coming man ; though *why,* I can't think. . . . But men are such sheep ! Directly one of them jumps through the gap. . . . She listens to Choselwhit most attentively, or rather she talks to him most attentively and *he* listens . . . and then *you* stroll through the room and she gets up and asks you a needless question. She confessed to me she thought

you ideally good-looking"—(Eustace blushed)—"and even said in some moods she wanted to dress like Madame Dieulafoy, ride astride, and explore Africa. . . . *I* should go in and win—brusquer l'affaire, écarter les épines . . . her bodice, by the bye, last night, fitted very badly at the back. I went to give the waist-band a little twitch and pricked myself cruelly on a huge pin, so be careful! . . . Three days' assiduity would do it and you have still a week to stay here if you aren't going to fausser compagnie. Of course you wouldn't then waste your sweetness on the desert air. . . . Lord W. would never let his son-in-law die of malarial fever in West Africa. . . . It's touch and go with Enid. . . . She's out for a career . . . and if it isn't you it'll be Choselwhit and a premier's wife. That's the way with those Brinsleys . . . like Austria, don't you know . . . what was the Latin motto? Tu, felix Austria, nube? . . . They are proud as proud and aristocrats of aristocrats . . . yet they never hesitate to make strengthening alliances, so that they may permeate Society and widen the family circle. Lady W. wasn't born in the purple, come! She's a woman of enormous ability and must have always had a presence. But it was no doubt at first her money . . . those tanneries. . . . And Lady Enid wouldn't mind for a moment that Jos. Choselwhit and his father and grandfather made their money out of boots at Northampton. . . . He's so much the master of Northampton that it seems ridiculous *he* shouldn't be Lord Northampton instead of those meaningless Comptons. He even began public life as a Republican! . . . Think of that! And it was only meeting the Princess of Wales that turned him round. She's irresistible. She hadn't been an hour you know at Northampton, opening Jos's hospital, than they were talking like old friends, and she was promising Mrs. Jos.—his wife was alive then—a receipt for making Danish tea-cakes and asking Charlotte Knollys not to let her forget. . . . Since then the great Choselwhit has been a pillar of the state. What's the time?"

Eustace. "Four . . . just . . ."

Suzanne. "Well, we mustn't stay here much longer. Think over what I've said. I should like you to get on. I liked your mother and I've always felt drawn to you, a sort of maternal second cousin, don't you know? . . ."

Eustace. "Suzanne . . . don't you . . . see. . . . No! . . . I am going to keep quite quiet . . . don't you see I could never love any one but you? . . ."

Suzanne. "*Rubbish* . . . there was that Miss Lacrevy my sister—Lucrece, you know—used to tell me about; and Bella Delorme; and no doubt several African princesses. . . . Love and marriage haven't much to do with one another. I've never been really in love with Feenix, but I've lived *quite* happily with him. . . . Wouldn't have changed. . . . I've had a lovely time, as the Americans say. I'm quite mature now, only three years younger than you are. . . . No doubt when I'm ten years older I shall be in the dangerous age both for you and me. But by that time you will be Governor General of India, and a peer and the father of a young family: far too wedded to respectability to run away with me, however I may make eyes at you from an opera box. At present, je frise le danger mais je me tiens saine et sauve. Sane, too, in the English sense. Spiritually I have often played Feenix false: bodily, never, and never could. I adore respectability, I love my children, my position, my parents . . . this beautiful place . . . even 52 Brook Street. Perhaps, too, I've a disgust for the slobbery side of love—the kissing, the tears, the exhausting emotions. But in imagination et sans trop approfondir—I've eloped with lots of men. . . ."

Eustace. "Don't say such things!"

Suzanne. "There was the Hall porter at your Hankey's Mansions—I've even had a tendresse for Lord W. himself . . . I'm sure somehow he feels it. . . . And Arthur Broadmead . . . I used to have quite a thrill go up my arm if he held my hand over long. But that Hall Porter! . . . I was mentally attracted to him for quite a week. Such a fine figure of a man! He'd been a sergeant in the Guards and got a V.C. in Egypt. He had perfect teeth—I believe in the Guards they use tooth-brushes—and a charming smile—as you must have noticed" (a groan from Eustace) . . . "and perfect manners. For quite a week I used to call at Hankey's Mansions on some excuse . . . to ask after Mrs. Lynn Linton, or the Oswald Crawfurds or the Douglas Murrays. Then one day I saw him eating his lunch behind the counter—or going off duty in a pot hat and dittos . . . or something . . . and shook myself and said, '*How* absurd you are! . . . *Drop* it!'

"Then there was Paderevski . . . and Cardeña, the violinist . . . and Canon Vulliamy . . . and—don't laugh! Captain Westlock. I have felt once or twice I could have been very happy with him . . . there is something I like about his blunt profile and his emphatic healthiness. But the dear, innocent, Anglo-Saxon thing hasn't the least idea. . . .

Perhaps if you and I had met ages ago when I was eighteen or nineteen and you were a London student, we might have fallen in love ; but marriage would have been impossible, out of the question, and by now we should have hated one another. As it is, let's be friends, dear friends, for the rest of our lives . . . spiritual affinities. . . . I'll help you and you can help me. . . . Good Heavens ! . . . half-past four ! And they'll all be wanting tea and think we've had a boating accident . . . or a love scene. Tie up the punt, put the cushions away, and catch me up. I'll walk on fast to the house. . . ."

Suzanne arrived on the first terrace to find her daughter Edith and the governess dispensing tea to guests and callers. . . . Eustace followed, a little breathless.

" Edith, dear, and Claire, *how* right of you not to wait ; we went out in the punt and Mr. Morven was so clumsy with it, we got tangled up in the rushes and I thought we should *never* be able to land ! John . . . do you want a second cup ? . . ."

" Thank you, I have finished my tea," said Lord Feenix, coldly ; and under his persistent eye-glass-scanning of her features Suzanne felt herself ridiculously and causelessly blushing.

* * * * *

Possibly Lady Enid had never for a moment let her fancy rest on Eustace. At any rate, during the remainder of their stay together, though always cordial and appreciative, she did not renew any invitation to either Chapelmead or Piccadilly ; but evinced an absorbing interest in Josiah Choselwhit's mission to the United States and Canada, and Captain Westlock's plans for arousing an interest in Imperial Federation.

A year afterwards, as you know, she married Captain Westlock ; and he eventually became an excellent Governor of Bombay and a still better Governor General of Australia.

CHAPTER XVII

SEVEN YEARS OF AFRICA

Duketown, Manyu River,
Oil Rivers Protectorate,
West Africa,
November, 1888.

DEAR LADY FEENIX,—

I am beginning this letter on November 2, and shall add pieces day by day as I feel inclined until the homeward mail is due about the middle of the month. Then I shall put it in my F.O. bag so that it may reach you safely; because there are bits in it that Lord Feenix might like to see, as all that I am doing here is merely a preliminary to the Colonial Office taking over this protectorate, when it is licked into shape.

* * * * *

My predecessor had to return last June; he was nearly dead from blackwater fever and could not stay here till I arrived to take over his work on a greater scale. I had to hurry out here as you know, and arrived in the middle of the second and worst half of the rainy season—August to November. Johnston once wrote of this place, this district, that its longest dry season was for six weeks, from January to February, with a few rainless days in July. All the rest of the year it is liable to rain every day of the month, for half an hour or for twelve hours. You can well believe it when you gaze on the lush vegetation. Every palm trunk is festooned with parasitic ferns and lycopodiums. These, by the bye, are iridescent—green, shot with blue, pink, and silver, very beautiful but rather wicked-looking. Most of the vegetation in the forests has an evil look, as though it had got the better of man and beast. The fetid odours of the undergrowth suggest decomposition, either because some of the disgusting arum spathes invite insect fertilization by their attractive stench, or because a large species of Ponera ant distils for its own protection a smell like that of a skunk. . . . Of course, I can see that to a professional botanist this whole region of the Niger Delta

or "Oil Rivers," from Lagos to the Cameroons is a wonderland, and I am becoming dimly aware that this stifling forest is full of valuable things: rubber, drugs, oils, dyes, and timber. As to oil, this of course *is* the palm oil country; and palm oil—two kinds, from the husk and kernel of the nuts that grow on this palm in great bunches—is wanted in England now—and the rest of Europe—for many things: for making soap, and for lubricating locomotives, and the cattle foods that Susan K.-T. is always bothering about. Over all the wide delta of the Niger and in the adjoining coast countries the one industry of the natives is making oil from the husk of these nuts and collecting the kernels separately. The oil from these (even more valuable) can only be expressed by machinery in Europe.

The natives want the oil not only to sell but also as a food; and to rub their bodies with. Except round the mission stations they wear scarcely any clothing, but partly to keep glossy and prevent the parched skin from cracking they rub themselves constantly with this thick orange-coloured grease. Up country they mix this with powdered red dye-wood and then appear quite a pretty red or mahogany colour. Palm oil "chop" is the dish of the country, and awfully good it is though rather bilious. . . . Bits of meat—rumour says not infrequently human!—fish, fowl, yams, sweet potatoes, plantains, mallow buds, and other native vegetables, and hard-boiled eggs are cooked in this rich liquid, always a beautiful orange colour; and the result is supremely delicious. The oil tastes a little like saffron, which is why a palm oil chop reminds me of *bouillabaisse*.

Money is not in use here. All trade is by barter . . . though incongruously enough a native trader who would look very suspiciously at a sovereign has long ago leapt to the comprehension of paper money, and most of the big traders are paid in cheques and may have an account with a Liverpool Bank, though in private life they are still cannibals and practise horrible fetish rites. However, even these pieces of paper have to be translated at last into trade goods: calicoes, beads, gunpowder, guns, brass plates, and GIN. If Oil is the chief thing that goes *out* of the Bights of Biafra and Benin, Gin is the chief thing that comes *in*. Most of it is made in Germany and Holland, but our distillers are fast catching up with the foreigner. Already vast vested interests are knit up with this trade—and therefore it has been suggested to me that I should go slow as a temperance reformer. . . .

I don't propose to touch domestic slavery at present, as it is usually a mild form of servitude and if a slave is ill-treated he runs away and enlists with another master. My chief difficulty will be regulating freedom of trade, which is chiefly the barter of palm-oil and kernels against trade goods. The merchants on the coast might buy their palm-oil far cheaper if they were able to go up in canoes or steam launches to the interior markets, but the " middle men " on the coast try to prevent that, by force if need be, as well as stopping the Forest negroes of the interior from visiting the coast. Then on the coast itself the old-established trading houses on one particular river mouth will combine to persecute new-comers and make it impossible for them to trade. Or one agent of an influential firm will try to persuade a local chief to make a corner in palm-oil and sell none to his rivals, and employ all the force he can to coerce minor chiefs into doing the same. The Niger Company up the main Niger makes use of all sorts of pretexts to maintain a monopoly of trade, not only against other English firms but against Frenchmen and Germans. All these victims of greed and aggression complain to me, and when I strive to establish genuine freedom of trade I find myself let in for small native wars or slanged in the Liverpool or Glasgow press. Each great trading firm or group of firms has its tame M.P., more or less paid to defend its interests, and these pestiferous " legislators " call repeatedly at the Foreign Office or attack me on the Foreign Office vote if I attempt to interfere with their protégés' self-conferred monopolies. So you see, it is anything but a bed of roses, especially when you throw in a struggle against the most far-reaching, most villainous form of fetish religion which holds all the natives here under its thumb, a religion of paralysing superstition, secret societies, cannibal clubs, adroit poisoning, uncanny hypnotism. . . .

I will write to you ever and again if it is only to find a confidante for my troubles and perplexities.

Yours,
EUSTACE MORVEN.

Deerhurst Park,
by Tewkesbury,
November 2, 1888

DEAR EUSTACE,—

It is nearly two months since you left. *What* a miserable rainy August it was! Still we had some lovely days at the

end, didn't we? What fun that week's driving tour was! Even John relaxed over it.

I did not write before because I thought you would not be settled down and letters might not find you. I am going to try and amuse you in your solitude by writing every now and again, but I shan't say much about politics for fear of some indiscretion which might embarrass my husband. Letters to any one in such an uncertain region as Africa may fall into any hands, perhaps even find their way to the editorial pigeon-holes of the *London Argus;* and I might find "Views of a Cabinet Minister's wife on Parnell" or on "Fair Trade" published, to John's confusion. Besides you will find all the political information you want in the newspapers that you subscribe to, and there's the silly "Society Chit-chat" among the weeklies I occasionally send you.

So I shall confine myself to family gossip and odds and ends about the persons we know.

Mr. Choselwhit is *not* going to marry Enid Brinsley, but a beautiful Nova Scotian he met on his travels. But Enid seems to be engaged to Captain Westlock—so at least they say. Lucilla Smith is going to the States to play Shakespeare.

My father is very proud because the Dombey Line has just launched a steamer of 9,000 tons, a perfect monster, though of course nowhere near the *Great Eastern*. Arthur Broadmead is very mysterious about coming events in South Africa. There is a rush to get concessions therefore gold mining or ivory or something of the kind from savage chiefs. Lady Towcester's ne'er-do-weel son has gone out to try and get one. You get a concession, that is to say you draw up a deed conferring on you all sorts of rights and privileges, you give the chief a rifle, a double-barrelled shot-gun, a musical box, a military uniform with epaulettes, two or three dozen bottles of rum, some red blankets and beads; he makes a cross on your document; and you have it witnessed by a trader or some one. Then you come home and put it on the market.

Do you know Lady Towcester? She has a larger family than she can provide for: five sons and seven daughters. The eldest son, of course, will come in for the entailed estates, but there is very little money to provide for the rest of the sons and daughters. She is therefore unwearied and quite unscrupulous in getting them a livelihood. All the daughters so to speak are being put up to auction and sold to the highest bidder. They get practically no dowry, and although pass-

ably good-looking and able to ride to hounds they have little in the way of assets but their ancient lineage on both sides. But their mother is so masterful that she picks up rich, uncouth young men in the manufacturing centres and marries them to her daughters out of hand ; giving in exchange of course the social entrée. As for the sons, they are never able to pass examinations so cannot get into Government employment in the ordinary way, but she forces them on rising politicians as private secretaries, and they can scarcely spell ! Or she packs them off to the Colonies with letters of introduction and a hundred pounds from which to make a start. She wanted John to give her a letter to you for her youngest son, but I intervened and said the climate was deadly.

I cannot help admiring Lady Towcester's energy and unscrupulousness in what she believes to be a good cause. Her husband is a sleepy peer who lives nearly all the year in the country and lives almost entirely for fox-hunting. He is therefore comparatively dormant in the summer ; only puts in an appearance at the House of Lords to record his vote in favour of one of *her* reforms. I believe he is a good landlord and manages his estate rather well ; but it has always been a poor peerage, and his spouse—she was an Avid of Grabhall —though a handsome woman with a charming voice and of the bluest blood—brought him very little in her *corbeille.* It was quite a love match as may be seen by the vigorous family of twelve children (I believe she had fourteen altogether); but all their finance seems to be concentrated on Pytchley, the eldest son, and the rest have to be provided for at somebody else's expense.

But that woman's energy ! She has fingers in ever so many pies, especially when the investment costs her nothing. She goes in for purity crusades and speaks from drays in Hyde Park with her sons round her ; if there is a *cause célèbre* of cruelty to children, say in high life or the upper bourgeoisie, she publicly adopts the child at the end of the proceedings and then turns up with it at one of her sons-in-law, in a four-wheel cab (for which the son-in-law's butler has to pay) and insists on her daughter taking it over. She is intensely evangelical and persecutes the Ritualists with letters in *The Times* signed " Millicent Towcester," and is one of Paul's many worries because she is always borrowing Diana's drawing-room for meetings of protest or propaganda. Yet in some ways she is most unscrupulous and thinks the Freebooters and the Avids should hold all the world in fee. She insisted

on my asking Arthur Broadmead to meet her at lunch about this son of hers who is going—or has gone—out to South Africa to get a concession from Lobengula (isn't that his name ?) And when Arthur demurred and said, " But he will only queer Blank's pitch," (perhaps I had better not write Blank's name,) she only said, " Just so : then Blank can buy him out or take him in." She justifies all this by saying she is a great Imperialist. However her precious Algernon is not likely to worry *you*, and it may be that your age of concessions is past.

Rumour says that Choselwhit believes in your part of the world (though he is never tired of sneering at *you*) and has put money into the chartered company that operates in your " hinterland "—as Bismarck calls it. Perhaps this is just as well, as it may encourage the F.O. to give more power to your elbow where the Treasury are concerned.

But I am drifting too much into politics.

Victor is preparing to go to Eton next term, and Walterkins will go to Harrow later on. So at any rate John wishes. He can't conceive of a male Molyneux being educated anywhere else. Edith is getting still more leggy and outgrowing frocks monthly. She cares for nothing but violent athletics, and Claire de Launay says she will never speak French. Carinthia is a greater darling than ever ; I only wish she weren't so delicate. I shall take her to the South of France for January and February.

* * * * *

I shall sign this with a big initial in red ink, like a Secretary of State does a Memorandum. S.

Duketown,
December, 1889.

Dear Lady Feenix,—

I have only written to you twice all this year because I have been so overdone with work I could never find the leisure to be introspective and descriptive. You will have heard of some of my doings in the newspapers and perhaps through Lord Feenix, who, I doubt not, gets surfeited with " papers " sent to him from the F.O., with caustic remarks on my " activities " from Bennet Molyneux.

Talking of newspapers, those of November brought to us here accounts, perhaps equally distorted, of what Johnston has been doing on the Shiré and Zambezi to the Portuguese, and how all this has led to an ultimatum, etc., etc. I don't

know Johnston very well, but I hope he has not been unduly hard on the Portuguese. Ever since I went to Portuguese Guinea I have had rather a partiality for them, and often feel that if a comparison were made between their management of tropical colonies and ours they would not come so badly out of the comparison. Did you see that *disgraceful* caricature in *Punch* some weeks ago, of Portugal as a monkey making inky paw marks on the map of Africa? I suppose it would be too much to expect of a *Punch* cartoonist that he should make himself acquainted with African history and with what the Portuguese have really done. Otherwise he would never have perpetrated anything so tactless and unjust. . . .

Amid all the excitement over Nyasaland, I suppose you hardly noticed a little rumpus we had here near the main mouth of the Niger? To the east of this rather paltry main exit of the Niger is a more imposing river mouth which is not only one of the innumerable Niger outlets, but is also fed by an independent stream from the interior. The river is generally called Nimbi in the native tongue. Missionaries have long been at work here under the black Bishop Crowther. Not so long ago the people who belong to the great Ijaw tribe had a most obnoxious religion, Totemism run mad. The divine or the ancestral spirit was supposed to reside in a variety of animals, mostly those of obnoxious type such as the crocodile, the python, the large monitor lizards; and it was strictly forbidden to kill or even to annoy these reptiles. The consequence was that down to about ten years ago crocodiles infested the river bank and snatched human victims daily; enormous pythons slept undisturbed in the streets and compounds of the houses, and vicious lizards six to eight feet long basked in all the sunny spots and lashed with their whip-like tails at any heedless passer-by.

White men—sailors, merchants, missionaries—were constantly getting into trouble over these obnoxious sacred reptiles. Sometimes they were enraged at the audacity of the crocodiles and fired at them when they attacked rowing boats or snatched a Kruboy off the beach; or unthinkingly they killed a python or a monitor when it was making off with the day's dinner—a duck, a fowl, a goat. Then the natives would seize them, tie them up, and hold them to ransom, threatening to kill them if they were not immediately redeemed by a heavy fine. Consuls and gunboats were constantly coming to Nimbi to remonstrate. . . .

Then one year there was an epidemic, a sort of plague—

which carried off many of the natives, and a ship's surgeon had the wit to attribute it to the joint malice of the crocodiles, pythons and monitors, and advised the frightened Nimbiites to abandon gods that were so capricious and malign. He managed to effect some cures of chiefs and of one or two fetish priests. The missionaries co-operated and confirmed his assertions. A wave of Christian enthusiasm swept over Nimbiland. Thousands were baptized. A month's slaughter of the reptiles followed, and it was only by the most strenuous endeavours that the missionaries averted *another* epidemic by recruiting fatigue parties of converts to throw these festering horrors into the river, where they fed the impartial sacred crocodiles.

Consequently, about ten years ago all this section of the Ijaws was Christian. Unhappily not of the same brand. On the coast they were Anglicans, but at the interior Oil Markets they had been reached by American Baptists from Sierra Leone. Soon the two sects clashed and furious disputes broke out over Infant *v.* Adult Baptism, and other dogmas. Theological acrimony became allied to trade disputes. The people of the interior had given in their allegiance to the Niger Company ; those of the coast were the loyal clients of the African Merchants' Association of Liverpool. At last the smouldering hate broke into flame. The men of Nimbi secretly organized a powerful party, paddled up stream all one night and at dawn fell on the chartered Baptists (as I call them for short). They were careful not to injure the one white man at Olulomo (a Niger Co.'s Agent), but they pretty well accounted for the people of their own colour. The women were taken as concubines, but all the men who did not escape into the bush were killed, cut up, and consumed in three days' feasting.

" Onward Christian soldiers " in the Ijaw version became a battle hymn for the victors.

Of course all this was utterly reprehensible, and I had to betake myself to Nimbi in a gunboat to investigate and to mete out capital punishment. A black Archdeacon was in charge, spiritually. Of course he was shocked and pained at these excesses of his flock ; yet not to the speechless extent I had imagined. When I consulted him as to what condign punishment could be inflicted on the coast people, proportionate to the enormity of the outbreak, he replied, " Suspension from all Church privileges ! " However, we had to go farther than that, with the ringleaders.

Don't think I am sneering at the missionaries. Their work for good in this God-forsaken country has been gigantic. But it ought to be conducted in a less haphazard fashion, and each recognized missionary Church should have its own sphere and not intrude as a rival on another Church's claim. Because the natives are so apt to espouse theological quarrels over doctrines and pursue them ferociously.

Now let me tell you of another episode of much pleasanter experience.

Part of my business in preparing this region for an orderly government is to get into touch with the " kings " or great chiefs of the interior who as yet keep aloof from us though they send their trade in a half-hearted way to the coast. Perhaps the most noteworthy potentate is the King of Benin, because Benin is quite an ancient state, known to us by repute from the fifteenth century but always very chary of direct relations with the European. Owing to all the rumpus the European Powers have been making over Africa during the last five or six years, the King of Benin is even less willing than his predecessors to receive a white man. To force oneself on him would only be to precipitate a nasty and unnecessary war.

But he maintains a kind of viceroy nearer to the coast—Nana, who collects tribute for him—what is called in the trade jargon, " comey "—at the mouth of the Benin River. Nana had a trade dispute some years ago with a British firm and he was badly swindled. What is worse, the British Consul of the day understood the case imperfectly and seized some of his property arbitrarily. Since then British trade at the mouth of that river had been boycotted. But Nana was a wise man. He sent a messenger to the Governor of Lagos overland ; the latter transmitted his appeal to our Government, and I was asked among other things to investigate when I came out here.

Fortunately the firm in question had had time to reflect and recalled their agent ; justice was done and reparation was made. The delighted Nana—he is immensely rich and the amount at stake was only a few hundred pounds, but like so many negroes he has a very keen sense of justice—invited me to come and see him at his inland town.

The merchants advised me not to go. Nana might have some scheme of holding me to ransom. They themselves had never been so far as his head town of Ogbobin. It was a rum sort of place, full of sacred " alligators " (as they *will*

miscall crocodiles—how we *love*, as a nation, to be misnamers !); my palm-oil chop would be poisoned, he would insist on my drinking fiery rum, etc., etc. But I had seen Nana and liked his face and frank manner and pithy pidjin English. So I went, in the State canoes (each with forty paddlers) which he sent for me, taking only my interpreter and personal servants.

We paddled for a day and a half up creeks or sluggish rivers that flowed from the west into the Benin estuary. After getting clear of the hateful mangroves, but never away from tidal mud, the vegetation, though sombre, was almost sublime. Indeed the scenery, with its walls of forest, monotonously dull green forest, its mud banks, and turbid water, its huge crocodiles asleep on the mud, its amphibious goggle-eyed mud-fish hopping out of the water and up the tree-trunks, its tree lizards and river turtles carried one back in thought to the Secondary Epoch, and man of any colour seemed an anachronism.

We spent the first night in some sheds erected by Nana's orders, made of palm fronds neatly enough, but harbouring, I thought, those terrible Emperor scorpions—six inches long, purple and yellow—which I dread much more than any snake. However, I kept an oil lamp burning all night. My bed was a wooden framework with interlaced strips of ox-hide, an importation evidently from Yorubaland ; and my bedding was scarlet blankets and silk coverlets ! Nana had also provided the " chop," as we call food in the coast jargon. Palm-oil soup (delicious), roast fowls, sweet potatoes, bananas fried in oil, roast ground nuts, a pine-apple, a bottle of port wine (rather public-housey in fiery flavour, but he knows I don't touch spirits), and some quite passable coffee.

I thoroughly enjoyed this repast and re-read *Dombey and Son* over it.

The next morning, when the mists had cleared, we continued our water journey and arrived in the broiling heat of noon. I was really slumbering on a couch prepared for me under an awning in my canoe when we came to a halt, and I was wakened by the shouts of the canoe-men greeting their master, Nana. He was there awaiting me on the sandy beach and helped me to alight, looking quite the chief in his mixed European and native garb ; that is to say a black wide-awake hat, a coat of good broadcloth and his limbs swathed in crimson silk. He is a tall, grave-looking man of brown skin with features that are rather negroid than negro.

His town was an eye-opener to me after this passage through the untouched jungle of mud and primeval vegetation. The houses of clay and thatch were large and well built, usually round a big court or patio. There were broad clean roads and big open squares, foliage trees with striking red blossoms, ornamental clumps of palms, and a sandy soil, which though it might harbour those tiresome burrowing fleas was infinitely preferable to the mud of the jungle.

He led me to the clean, empty house that had been prepared for my dwelling. Already my "boys" were taking possession of the inner court and cooking sheds. A Sudan bedstead had been placed in a room with a broad and shady verandah, and native stools—carved out of huge blocks of wood—completed the furniture, with some clay oil lamps. Having installed me, he had the infinite tact—not too common *chez nous*—to leave me alone to wash and rest. He did not even come when the lunch—more sumptuous than, but similar to, the dinner of yesterday—was served by silent young ladies, practically unclothed except for a twist of blue velvet or a kerchief of orange silk. So I again read Dickens over my meal. Then I had a siesta during which two young ladies —two for propriety, I was told—fanned away the mosquitoes, while a third skilful young person searched my toes for any "jiggers"[1] that might be burrowing into them. Then a cup of tea of my own bringing—Nana supplied the goat's milk—and at five, an hour before sunset, I went to the State reception and banquet prepared for me. Out of respect for Nana I went in uniform.

I arrived in the middle of a great square surrounded by Nana's houses and those of his wives. There must have been a thousand men and women assembled. First there was a deafening and dangerous salute from his warriors' guns, not a few of them loaded! Then a great "lulli-looing" of the women, all naked to the waist but most magnificently draped in silks and velvets from their high, "Empire" waists downwards; and their heads swathed in kerchiefs of silk. Never anywhere have I seen such a gorgeous display of fabrics from the looms of Lyons, never at home did I realize velvet could take such superb dyes. There was in particular a blue purple that Abbey or Tadema would love to paint. Had the Romans velvet, by the bye? I think not.

Each woman had a large, stiff, long-stemmed fan of ox-hide, heart-shaped, showing the black and white hair, and also

[1] Burrowing fleas.—H. H. J.

trimmed or laced with scarlet cloth. They waved these fans continually and rhythmically. It cooled the air and drove away the flies.

We were then offered a selection of European wines and liqueurs and cleverly concocted cocktails. After that Nana and I and a select few of his subordinate chiefs retired to a cool, spacious house with flat, white-washed mud walls and sat at a table. The vulgarer sort, the slaves and servants, had their feed outside. But we had knives and forks and spoons, enamelled iron plates and cups for our drinks. The food was much the same, only that in addition to the other dishes I have described there was some excellent fish cooked with red peppers and tomatoes.

After dinner we had a smoke and a chat—almost a business talk—sitting on chairs and stools in the open air, with the moon rising. All round the great square, fires were being lit, and casks were filled with palm wine, laced with rum. When the moon was high enough a great concourse of men and women filled the square ; dancing began, of a type the London County Council would disapprove—by the bye, I see there is a very active Mrs. Ormiston Chant to the fore ?—with intervals for drinks ; and about ten o'clock, the proceedings becoming rather orgiastic, I thought I had better withdraw the sanction of my Consular uniform. But the yelling, the tom-tomming and whooping and trumpeting went on until midnight. So I sat up, made myself a cup of tea, put my lamp outside my mosquito curtain and read Dickens until the small hours.

* * * * *

Yours,
EUSTACE MORVEN.

52 Brook Street, W.,
July 2, 1890.

DEAR EUSTACE,—

It is ages since I wrote you anything like a long letter—"nothing more than polite scraps acknowledging yours," you say. It is useless to plead that I am desperately busy and shall be, so long as John is in Office. But there it is, futile as you may think my "busyness," whilst you are Empire building. So far from being bored by your long letters they are a delight to me ; and all the really long ones I am keeping for you to use some day in a book ; for they give your first fine careless rapture, which you could never recapture years afterwards when you endeavoured to recall half effaced impressions.

I thought your letter about your long surveying expedition through that labyrinth of creeks very vivid in its description; but the adventures up the Manyu River "take the cake," if I may use American slang (Diana being a Bostonian hates all American turns of speech).

I wonder what you will think of the Anglo-German Convention which was signed and published yesterday? The gist of it of course was known to us ever since Sir Mulberry Hawk came back from Berlin: and was perhaps purposely made an open secret so that it might be freely criticized in the Press before the signing took place. Some of the papers of course are objecting to the cession of Heligoland, but I fail to see what use the Germans can make of that crumbling square mile, except as a bathing resort; whereas we have definitely assigned to *us* a magnificent empire in Africa. It is to be followed by agreements with France and Portugal and then there will be no more wars and rumours of wars. I expect you are getting tetchy about your hinterland, and wondering how far Lord W. is going to give in to the French on the north-west and the Germans on the south-east. Your beloved Portuguese, by the bye, have not been so badly treated after all.

* * * * *

I have become of late more drawn towards my sister-in-law Diana, than I used to be. She is perhaps more genial, more nearly on a level with faulty humanity, I am probably more appreciative of real goodness as I grow older.

You know how we have often laughed about her Home for Fallen Women near Richmond; how easily she is taken in; and the extraordinary persons she gets to visit it, who are really ladies who have sinned just as much—if it be sin—but who have managed to avoid a stumble. To Diana there is everything in the marriage status, in the being able legitimately to call oneself "Mrs." Her pity and reproach are reserved for the unhappy females who have not managed to get that cover for their escapades or their wretched livelihood.

And yet, I sometimes think there is a shrewd purpose too behind her charity and her faith in people. There is Bella Delorme. . . . Don't blush a month hence when you read this. . . . In the course of years Diana has had a distinctly good effect on Bella. Bella by being roped in as a "visiting lady" to the Home has long since acquired a propriety of voice and manner you can't have noticed—what was it? five years ago? at Arthur Broadmead's *soupers fous*. (A. B.

is very grave and preoccupied nowadays. I don't think it is South Africa so much as some private love affair which has gone wrong. He always speaks very kindly of you, but one never hears about him as being particularly rackety. Some one told me the other day he had gone in for bicycling and was rather keen about this new type of machine they have invented, with wheels both the same size.)

Her life—I mean Bella's—at Twickenham (with the stalwart William who is getting stout and does Herbert Waring parts in comedy) is said to be a model of propriety. The daughter—I forget her name—lives with them. Bella, like William, has left comic opera for drawing-room comedy, and is really awfully good in Marie Wiltonish parts, managing to give her voice and accent a more cultivated tone. She still has lots of humour and can be delightfully funny at times. But as Max Beerbohm says, "she is funny without being vulgar" —or did he say it about his brother? I forget.

Well: do you know, I think much of Diana's getting hold of her to help with the Home was *intentional?* It flattered and sobered the bouncing Bella, and her association with "Mrs. Paul Dombey" knocked on the head all those silly stories about Paul that used to circulate some seven years ago—that he was toqué over Bella and visited her behind the scenes at the Alhambra. No one, of course, ever dared to hint such a thing to Diana—she would have turned them into a pillar of salt by one straight look. But some beast—Paul told me—used to score with a pencil low paragraphs in the *London Argus*, evidently written by that inexpressibly horrid Bax, and post them to her.

The stories soon died a natural death when Diana was seen driving Bella down to Richmond with Lady Towcester and Susan K.-T. to visit her Home; and William Strongbow gave his scoundrel brother a strong hint that if he allowed nasty paragraphs about Bella to appear in any of his papers he would give him a thrashing which would send him to hospital.

I don't mind telling *you* it was an interest in *Lucilla Smith* —Paul seems to have known her mysterious husband in Russia—that started Paul on his Shakespeare and Stage mania, years ago. And besides that Diana always says it was *she* that drove him to take an interest in the Drama by her resolve to purify the music halls and help to raise the social status of women on the Stage.

The whole thing has its droll side. Diana, who when she first married was such a Puritan that, apart from Irving and

the Lyceum or Wilson Barrett or at lightest the Kendals, one didn't dare take her to the play after dinner, is now a frequent first-nighter ! And Paul, who seems to me only to take an interest in bananas or triple expansion engines or ethnology, may be seen once a week in her opera box yawning whilst Diana takes a severe interest in the ballet, firstly to satisfy herself they've got enough on and that it's made of flannel, and secondly that they have had enough to eat. She belongs now to the Church and Stage Guild, which was got up by Percy Granger, a Colonial bishop in Africa, but who seems to be usually living in England.

Lucilla Smith—d'you remember how dull she seemed at Deerhurst years ago ?—now plays rather doleful parts in what are called " problem plays." Either she has to burn a Bible or find out she isn't properly married, or some one else finds out she has had a past. In private life she puts on an air of unfathomable melancholy. So I am rather glad she has caught on in the States (Diana gave her lots of introductions), and hope she will marry a rich American and settle down before she grows visibly old. How I've rambled on and forgotten about that Home ! I have become a visiting lady—to please Diana. And she looked so pleased when I said " yes "—such a pretty wild-rose flush came into her pale cheeks—that I sealed the acceptance by a hearty kiss, which made us both more truly sisters than we had been before.

She drove me down to Richmond one superb day at the end of May—horse chestnuts, laburnum, lilac, may, apple blossom all out. It isn't any longer called a " home " for any one, only a " Hostel " for young women out of employment. But of course Diana only admits " cases " that are brought to her notice of young women who have gone wrong but manifest some desire to get right again with the world. . . . So there is no need—as Diana finds most of the money—to put anything up outside the house or on the note-paper. . . .

There is a good, reliable, kindly matron in charge, a relation of Diana's uncompromising Scotch maid. She keeps order and is motherly at the same time. The theory is that all these young women of ages between seventeen and thirty are out of employment and preparing for suitable openings—on the stage (Diana doesn't think the Stage—now—is a bit more dangerous than any other livelihood), in shops or in some trades. Some of them learn type-writing, because type-writing machines are being more and more used in the City and in public offices, actually with women to work them !

You know they have had them for years at the F.O., shut up in a tower, not so much to shield them from Bennet Molyneux's attentions as to spare him the shock of this latest and—he thinks—most disastrous innovation. It was Algie Verisopht who started it, in his pathetic desire to believe in everybody and every new movement.

Bella comes every now and again to see if she can find an opening for a likely young person ; she also gives lessons on stage elocution and even in the more decorous dancing. Musicians come down to try voices. The women usually only stay a few months before something is found to suit them.

Well : that is enough of philanthropy. As I re-read what I have written to put in stops and touch up the t's and l's and make it legible, it sounds awfully as though I were trying to get a cheque from you. But of course, I had no such arrière pensée, and Diana would only return it if you sent such a thing. I don't know why, but she is a little cold about you. I think your religious views rather shock her. . . .

As I walked with Bella in the garden behind the Home—such a lovely one, quite large—I could not help the mischievous impulse to ask her if she knew you ; but she was very discreet—She and her husband—she no longer says 'usband and it is " William " now, not " Bill "—had run across you once on the Riviera, years ago. But her eyes met mine and she gave just the slightest wink, and then asked me if Lord Feenix could give her some Sunday tickets for the Zoo.

You know, of course, Rhodes got his Charter last November ? John has given him all the backing he could ; and so did Choselwhit latterly. But when it was first bruited, C. seemed inclined to ask disagreeable questions in the House. But he announces now that he is in favour of a bold South African policy and admits Mr. G. was wrong when he surrendered the Transvaal.

Of course as I guessed, Algy Freebooter and his precious syndicate came home with a concession ; or rather without it, because R. thought it best after all—and I believe used horrid language—to buy them out before they left Capetown. They must have made Ten Thousand pounds profit, and I imagine Algy's share won't be far short of Five Thou. Bax was in it, and Bax had—on it—to be given a block of Ten thousand shares in the new company to stop the " Queries for the Querulous " or " Things we should like to know " in the *London Argus*. Imperialism has its seamy side. I believe Lord W. hates this Company business, but what is he to do ?

The Treasury won't find a penny for what it calls "African adventures"; so unless the French and Portuguese and Germans are to mop up all Africa, we have got to give the rein to private enterprise.

* * * * *

Now I must end this portentous letter. If I stop to re-read it I shall think it too imprudent to send, and I really can't sit down and write another! Do you know it is 1.30 a.m. by my boudoir clock!

S.

[Duketown, Oil Rivers Pte.]
November, 1890.

* * * * *

Yes, I have been very ill. For once the papers told the truth. But the critical time only lasted a week and I would not give up and let them send any one out. I was so afraid of that ass, H., coming and spoiling what I have achieved already.

As soon as I was fit to move, I went down in my steam launch to the Cameroons and had myself carried up in a hammock to the open grasslands of Cameroons mountain. Such a glorious country between nine and ten thousand feet above the sea: almost literally above the sea, for the sea is only a few miles away. Consequently the sun seems to set in the middle of the sky, so high is the horizon line. North-eastward I could look up to the great Cameroons peak another 3,500 feet higher, painted in rich colours with its blue ashes, red slag, orange lichen and green grass; south-eastward my gaze extended far into undiscovered Africa—a tumbled panorama of blue hills and cotton-wool clouds. The great Forest swathed with green-grey streamers of lichen just reached to the edge of my camp. There were blackberry bushes with blackberries on them for the picking, brilliant everlasting flowers, and a good many blossoms that seemed half English in aspect and nature. . . .

Here I shall stay and recuperate: the Cameroons is within my consular though not my commissarial commission. The Germans are very kind—We have often had frontier disputes, and officially our respective attitude has occasionally stiffened. But they think me "wissenschaftlich." A German doctor toils up here once a week to test me in various ways and assure himself I am getting strong.

It seems ungrateful to say it, but WHY did Lord Branville ever give them this glorious mountain? We actually annexed

it once, and Johnston ruled here for a little while; then in 1886 we gave it back!

No more at present from

E. M.

52 Brook Street,
October 2, 1890.

* * * * *

I have been rather perturbed by a report in the papers that you were seriously ill. I wrote to Bennet Molyneux, but he says latest telegram reports you convalescent.

Surely you ought to be having a holiday soon? It is monstrous to keep you stewing in the Niger Delta all these years. . . . John and I went in August to Balmoral for a short stay. He was Minister in attendance. I have been stopping in town for a few weeks before going to Deerhurst. Feenix has had to go over to Paris on business—partly *your* business—and I thought I should enjoy a little of London out of the season, with Carinthia to take shopping. . . .

It occurred to me one day I would go and see where your mother was buried in Highgate Cemetery. I remembered your saying she was buried there "in the sure and certain hope, etc." The gate-keeper helped me to find the place, but the grave was in a shockingly weedy condition and evidently hadn't been attended to for months. So I asked in a low sweet voice for the address of the florist, and having got it I drove there and gave him *such* a piece of my mind. I said I should come back in a fortnight, and if . . . etc., etc. I went again yesterday. Such a change, though a little raw and gaudy.

Coming away, I met Adela Tudell—Lacrevy that was—She has a dear little child buried there. We talked about you, about my silly sister Lukey, who has a studio of her own in Chelsea and paints from the nude, to mother's consternation; and about Sir James Tudell, who now has a gorgeous house in Park Crescent. I drove her back to Harley Street. She said she hadn't the faintest idea you ever thought of proposing to her. She only wished it was allowable to have two husbands, as she couldn't part with her James, to whom she was devoted (I mean James junr., she detests her father-in-law): and yet on account of her brother she could easily have fallen in love with you!

She has, of course, by now three children (one dead) and is growing portly, so it is quite permissible to repeat all this.

She and her husband live with her father in Harley Street; they don't seem to see much of Sir James Tudell.

He turns everything to money and has his fingers in many concerns besides railways; I suppose it is this genius for making profits out of all he touches that wins John's respect. But for my part. . . .

* * * * *

Sir James is now hand-in-glove with the Rhodes group, and is talking of some great African company of his own to the north of Rhodes's sphere. . . .

Do come home soon; and when you come let me or Diana or Adela Tudell find you some real nice woman. You *must* marry and have children, and I will be the kindest of aunts to them.

We must make the Government do something for you. I shall lay siege to John and insist on a well-paid Governorship. . . . Até logo—as you *say* the Portuguese say—So long, dear friend.

S.

Eustace, however, by some obstinacy he could not explain, stuck to his difficult task of getting the Oil Rivers protectorate ripe for a more formal administration. He had another bout of blackwater fever, but this time recruited his health by a trip to the semi-desert atmosphere of Sokotó.

With all the movements and promotions and decorations that were taking place, he felt himself overlooked. In his correspondence he affects to despise newspaper popularity and fame; yet it nettled him to see how seldom the press mentioned him, how the editors seemed to ignore his annual reports and articles on trade products.

Then again, as Suzanne was by now an idealized woman and yet another man's wife, he felt inclined to mortify himself and her by not seeing her again. The idea of marrying any one else was repellent. Perhaps also at this time Africa was become his mistress. Normally in very good health when not actually floored by an accumulation of malaria, he was profoundly interested in the marvels, the mysteries, the unanswerable enigmas he discerned in the history, the human races, the animal and vegetable life between the southern limits of the great Desert and the Gulf of Guinea.

He would have to return some day, but he would not mind if after a brief rest they sent him back as Governor where he had reigned as Commissioner. . . .

His musings, his self-imposed exile were interrupted early in 1892 by a telegram recalling him "for consultation."

On his return he was informed that he would not be sent back to the Niger, but probably to Central Africa. The Foreign Office and the Cabinet were grateful to him for all he had done, but the fact was—er—he—er—had rather offended a powerful Company in Glasgow by his plain-spokenness regarding alcohol, and his—er—rather arbitrary action respecting freedom of access to the markets at—

This from Bennet Molyneux, in charge of the African Department. Lord Wiltshire asked him to dinner one night, and Lady Enid Westlock was there and scarcely remembered him. Lord W. was so engrossed with the coming General Election in the summer and the Slave Trade war in Nyasaland that he seemed to have lost interest in Morven and the Niger. However, when he resigned office he left on his table at the Foreign Office a memo for his successor, Lord Mentmore: "If you want a man you can depend on to clear up Central African doubts and difficulties, send Eustace Morven."

So the autumn of 1892 saw Eustace voyaging out over stormy seas and through equatorial calms to Capetown.

Eustace to Suzanne.

R.M.S. *Rochester Castle,*
September–October, 1892.

. . . I shall begin this on board ship to while away the boredom of the voyage. I wrote you a brief line from Madeira to say I had got thus far, but it only said that much. I still felt too sick at heart to say I was sorry for going off in the way I did. I hate saying good-bye to the very few people I care about. The original words that composed that phrase have no meaning to me. "Farewell" is more practical, but about both these utterances there is an unexpressed finality which implies never meeting again. That would be dark despair to me, however lightly *you* might take it—just one more boring devotee the less. . . . I am sorry, now that leagues and leagues of indigo sea lie between us, that I was so often grumpy this last leave at home: that I did not snatch every opportunity of being with you. Diana Dombey is no doubt a paragon among women, but she doesn't care two straws for me and I am equally indifferent to her. I like Paul, but he is so reserved. I am not good at opening oysters; and all I felt about evenings at their house in Portland Place or that one visit I paid them (it was abominable weather)

at Goring, was that they were got up to please *you*, and that Diana, *mollement* and without conviction, was trying to get me married by having an assortment of possible females to meet me. Indeed, I went so far as to suspect her of having imported one or two of the most completely repaired and reformed from her Home. In her enthusiasm for this work of regeneration, and especially as my lack of religious belief makes me antipathetic to her, she would consider any one good enough to marry *me* and be taken out to Africa and lost to sight. And even my visits to Deerhurst were spoilt by your always thinking it necessary to have some callow girl about . . . in the hope that she might take my fancy . . . or asking some sprightly widow. . . .

I must own to having felt very hipped this last time at home. I think Lord W. might do more for me than he has done. I even think, though this is a delicate matter, *entre nous deux*, that Lord Feenix, merely as a politician, might attempt to understand me better and to realize what I am worth in Africa. Why should I not be Governor of this or that or High Commissioner of the other? I am just as good as that stuffy old ass, Bellamy, whose wife used periodically to run away with Arthur Broadmead—Just as good? Fifty times better!

I opened my mind about all this to Broadmead before I left. He was looking rather tired and dispirited, I thought, and he agreed with me that the system of appointments is simply rotten. He declares he has proposed me for Cyprus, for Bulombel, for Natal, but Lord Feenix says he can't take me away from Lord W.; that Lord W. believes in me, etc. etc. Well then, in that case, why doesn't Lord W. give me something more definite, more settled to do; I mean a diplomatic post; say Morocco or even Zanzibar? I'm sure I've earned it after nearly fifteen years of strenuous Charwoman's work in the roughest parts of Africa.

Then again I never have enough leave at home in which to finish any book; and meantime, —— and —— figure as great explorers, when they haven't made a *tithe* of the discoveries I have.

Bennet Molyneux says it all comes from my running my head into brick walls and having so many fads; worrying about alcohol or slavery or monopolies, and not trying to make the best of everything and everybody!—*Ay de mí*—which is appropriate, as we are just passing the Canary Islands, where they speak Spanish.

Steamer journeyings would be endurable—especially on this fair-weather route to the Cape—if it weren't for their "amusements," and the plaguy "Amusements Committee," which the brainless or the match-making on board are allowed to get up. The food on this line—maugre Lord Randolph—is good, my appetite rushes to meet it, I am sufficiently distinguished to have a cabin allotted to myself, and—mirabile dictu!—am not obliged to share a sleeping apartment of six feet by four with a total stranger who may be a thief, a drunkard, a maniac, or a consumptive; there is an excellent library on board and all the materials for resting and recuperating: but "you mustn't be churlish" and must be enrolled by this blasted Amusements Committee (unless you are over sixty). If you object, they instance Lord Randolph who hunted the slipper and drank deep (only hock cup I believe) and ran egg and spoon races and put on fancy dress. . . . Why is this interference with the liberty of the passenger permitted on a ship and never heard of on a train, where it would be called ragging? You are not asked to dance and sing on the way from Euston to Inver ess, or even—I am told—on the week's journey across America

* * * * *

This break in the letter means the interval between getting the last glimpse of Tenerife and the first of St. Helena. During this time, instead of reading and resting and perhaps writing my memoirs—for I begin to feel *very* old—I have acted in a burlesque, have been a Christy Minstrel with a blacked face, have sprained my wrist at deck cricket, have lost five pounds playing at a new variety of whist called "Bridge," have danced nearly every night, and led a girl of twenty-nine (really rather a nice creature) to think I was going to propose at the end of the voyage—she has already arranged for me to meet her mother after we arrive. Her parents live in the suburbs of Capetown. She is a clever palmist and has told my hand. If the future comes as true as the past——! Certainly, she wasn't far out about that!

Well: there goes St. Helena. I went up and saw Longwood and it reminded me incongruously of the Pavilion at Brighton, only because they are both so emphatically early nineteenth century, perhaps the most ghastly period for bad taste and enthroned ugliness in the history of man. Napoleon must have died of moral if not of physical cancer—after Fontainebleau!

I landed at Capetown a week ago yesterday and went to

the best hotel I could find. So poor was it that I was very much relieved when a note came from C. R. asking me to stay a day or two with him at Rondebosch. He is installed in a beautiful old Dutch mansion among the pines. It is amazing to find such stately architecture and room-planning dating from —— ? the early eighteenth century—in a colony. The rooms are not quite finished so far, as regards furniture, but it is all being done in excellent taste, and of course regardless of expense.

C. R. has apparently one half of the house to himself ; into which I haven't penetrated ; at least you feel rather a Bluebeardy tone when he takes leave of you in an atrium that leads to his suite of rooms. Most of the guests have a sitting-room and a bedroom. Yet with all this luxury there is a lack of discipline. Some days C. R. goes out, disappears for the day or even the day and a night ; then all arrangements about meals and decorum are out of gear. The meals are unpunctual, the English servants are noisy and quarrel audibly with the Cape-boy or quasi Hottentot part of the household (much more efficient and obliging).

A charming woman is staying in the house, a Mrs. ——. But while she for the time being acts as hostess and enables C. R. to invite ladies to his parties, she is not in a position to keep the English servants in order. But we have become quite intimate. She is of typical South African beauty and remarkably talented in music and other things, but mated to a brute, though he is actually —— —— in the Transvaal. She told me C. R. had been extraordinarily kind to them and had helped her ever so tactfully in straightening out their affairs. . . .

Every now and then I get a half hour's talk with him. . . . He seems moody, not to say grumpy, and inveighs against Lord W. for not standing up more firmly to the Portuguese, the Germans, and Leopold. . . . He thinks Johnston is overspending himself, trying to suppress the slave trade. He advised me to steer a middle course and try and conciliate the Arabs. Leopold has given a big concession to the Tudell Group, but that I had already heard from Lord Feenix (isn't he a director ?) And this Group (the Ubunyanza Company) is taking over a large slice of N.E. Rhodesia. I understand they pay the Company £75,000 for this concession, the securing of which—I mean, rights from the native chiefs—cannot have cost R. more than £2,000.

I shall start in a few days for Kimberley and Bechuanaland,

and thence where the railway leaves off, trek to the Zambezi and beyond.

* * * * *

Here we may leave Eustace Morven, since his adventures and achievements in Ubunyanza (or the Lake Region of Central Africa) between 1893 and 1895 are well known and have been described elsewhere by his own pen. Letters from Suzanne reached him once in a way in the heart of Africa—I have some of them before me. They describe the opening of the Victoria and Albert Museum by the Queen, the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York, the wonderful summer weather of 1893; how, persuaded by Arthur Broadmead (who had ridden on a Safety to Chapelmead and back in one day!) she had learnt to bicycle and had circled round Battersea Park before breakfast, with two daring princesses of the House of Wales; what she thought of *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *Widowers' Houses* in 1892 and the excitement caused by the *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* in 1893; her devotion to Rudyard Kipling's writings, her sister Lukey's adoration of Aubrey Beardsley, her sister Frances's attack on Mr. Kensit when he came on an anti-popery crusade to St. Eustatius', Holborn—("Fanny—or, as she *will* be called, Frances, has got into the papers! Think of that! You know how mad she has become about ritual: she really goes beyond the R. C.'s. Added to that is her passionate but quite respectable —she is forty-four—devotion to Father Blougram. They were ready for the Kensitites when they came, and the *instant* Kensit began his disturbances Fanny boxed his ears till he was half stunned, and whanged his burliest supporter with her fald-stool. Upon my word I took an interest in her for the first time, especially as she drove to 52 Brook Street after the excitement and burst into hysterical weeping.")

Also she mentioned that she and John had been over to France in the spring of '94 to see the trial trip, "Paris to Rouen and back," of "motor-carriages." She said the speed "amounted on an average to *fifteen miles an hour!*" And that she thought there was something in it.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE END OF PAUL'S ROMANCE

PAUL GAY-DOMBEY—but about this time he like his brothers was beginning to drop the tiresome "Gay" —Paul Dombey had been thinking in the early 'nineties he would like to sit in the House of Commons and legislate or assist in improving our legislation, specially in regard to shipping questions. He was longing to reform the Board of Trade and accomplish other impossibilities.

His father, Sir Walter, was by now virtually a sleeping partner in the firm, retiring more and more to an easy life near Brighton, where his mother, in rather failing health, was able to revive old memories of the 'forties. His unmarried sisters had become bachelor girls, Lucrece with her studio and flat in Chelsea, Fanny with a flat in Bloomsbury from which she could assist in the High Church services at St. Eustatius. Perceval had chambers in Staple Inn ; and the once expensively decorated house in Onslow Square was to be disposed of. His mother and father had no purpose in entertaining now, in London : a comfortable *pied à terre* was being looked for near Victoria Station where they could lead a Darby and Joan existence, as free as might be from household cares.

New blood was being taken into the Firm, relieving Paul of a portion of his cares and responsibilities ; indeed it was in contemplation (as Paul had no heir and his brothers were in the Church or in literature) to turn the celebrated "Dombey and Son" into a limited liability Company, even if Paul was to remain in control as Managing Director and Chairman.

Paul was barely fifty and in the prime of life so far as mental and physical vigour were concerned. Indeed, in his cheerier moods, when a certain black care descended from his shoulders on his early morning gallops in Regent's Park, he felt he might be beginning life, be at the portals of a great career between fifty and seventy, a twenty years of life which was for most successful men their period of statecraft. He was

rich, and if any one knew the Empire and believed in it, he did.

Sir James Tudell had got in for Avonmouth (as a Conservative or Liberal Unionist) at the 1892 General Election, and in spite of his vulgarity was already making a mark in the House.

Paul, therefore, having spoken at large on this subject to a few intimates, half in consultation, and the intimates having been conjured to let it go no farther, soon found himself approached by the Liberal Five Hundred of Southampton West and was asked to become the prospective candidate for that constituency at the next election. He had given a qualified assent in 1893, and had already taken the necessary steps, as preliminaries, of building a new cricket pavilion for the New Forest and Totton Rangers, becoming President of the Redbridge All-Red Football Club (with a whacking subscription) and agreeing to open the Millbrook Mechanics Institute, a new billiard table preceding him.

His assent was qualified—he said—only because of his hesitancy over Gladstone's scheme of Home Rule—though he was assured privately in Parliament Street that Mr. G. was on the eve of retirement and that Lord Mentmore would adopt a much more " imperial " policy. But he knew himself that before taking the plunge he would like to be more at his ease about Lucilla.

The fight might be bitter. Baxendale Strangeways had influence in an adjoining constituency, at any rate knew his way about Southampton. At present he was showing, by this covert hint and that, his hatred of the Dombey Line, and of Paul, and in anonymous paragraphs was airing his suspicions that there was more than mere Society friendship between " a great shipping magnate " and the leading Shakespearean actress of the day.

As to Lucilla, if it had not been for the boy Rupert, he would at all costs have snapped the tie between them. But he could not insult her by offering money, that she might go her separate way and lead her own life. She was now quite sufficiently well off, and her love was so entirely unmercenary that she would not even accept presents in her pride at possessing him. Indeed once when she was first going to America and he had given her a bank-note for £100, she had sent it to Diana as a subscription to the Home at Richmond : most embarrassing, because Diana feeling an ever warmer friendship for her had pressed her when she returned to come

and stay with them at Goring, or at least to dine at Portland Place and share their opera box.

Their lover-like relations had almost ceased. An accident, a lost train—Lucilla was purposely unpunctual, it seemed—a *crise de larmes*, and the proximity of Wimpole occasionally precipitated a fall into amatory relations. And the recovery of his reason made Paul wearier than ever of this *succuba*, this double life of hypocrisy and subterfuge. There were in him as in most men two warring personalities: the ambitious, keen man of affairs who could have set the British Empire right and kept it right, who could have ruled it cleanly, honestly, unswervingly, who was steel and pine and crystal where the professional statesmen of the day were lead and lath and talc; and there was the prehistoric male, the inborn polygamist, unable in his masculine vanity to resist the appeal of Eve . . . "the woman tempted me. . . ."

Paul, the man of business and would-be politician, in some moods could have pushed Lucilla down a disused well, expunged her remorselessly, chopped away her tentacles unflinchingly; his ancestor of the fifteenth century in such a revolt of the spirit might have had her tried for sorcery; except that in those days adultery did not disqualify for a political career. But Paul, the natural man, would have shrunk with horror from mere untenderness towards the woman who had given herself; even as it was, he felt the world well lost in her embraces; was turned from his resolve by a look from her lioness eyes, by the beauty of her gestures, the swaying of her drooping figure.

He tried to avoid her, but could not pretermit his occasional visits to his boy, his godson, either at his school in Cambridge or at the Wimpole cottage. As to the boy's grandmother, Mrs. Rupert Smith, she had long guessed the puzzle, and Paul accepted with heartfelt gratitude her tacit understanding, her avoidance of embarrassing questions. She, who had had much need of discretion and silence in her own past and had only regained tranquillity of mind and control of the passions in the pursuit of horticulture, would not add to his trouble by any probing of the mystery. She affected to regard him in no other light than Rupert's godfather. She allowed her servants and any villagers who might be qualified to remark on her visitors to assume that Mr. Dombey or "the gentleman from London" had been a friend of Lucilla's lost husband in Russia.

One day in the spring of 1894, Paul had gone down to see

little Rupert, a handsome boy of eleven, who loved his godfather and innocently told his schoolfellows that his "real" father had died in Russia, long ago. Lucilla had also come down from London and for once seemed sensible. She even discussed lightly the prospect of a year's engagement in the States, and asked Rupert if he could promise to be the best of boys to Granny whilst she was away. In the afternoon she drove Paul and Rupert to Cambridge, Paul being bound for Yarmouth. A porter was found to hold the pony. Mother and child followed Paul to the platform ; for one of Lucilla's irritating traits was a fondness for protracting farewells . . . if she liked you. She would not only say good-bye with all regret in her drawing-room, but again in the hall, and on the door-step, and then walked with you to the garden gate of her house in the Wood, and waved a hand in the direction of Regent's Park.

Whilst they talked on the down-train platform, Paul trying to find if it was the right platform for the Yarmouth connection, a train from London to Newmarket rolled in ; and from out of it descended to stretch his legs and get a local paper the wicked Bax, on his way to Newmarket for racing. He found himself confronting Paul, Lucilla, and Rupert before the group could dissolve into its component parts. One comprehensive glance whilst he raised his hat with an ironic smile took in the factors of the problem : "Papa, Maman, et Bébé," he said within himself as he turned towards the bookstall.

Back in London, at the *Argus* office, embittered by a round of dam' bad luck, betting on favourites unfavoured by Fate and outsiders who "also ran," the Editor of the *London Argus* and usually the writer of the dreaded column "Queries for the Querulous," pulled certain scattered notes and memoranda out of a pigeon-hole, glanced through them and dashed off a few suggestions to his inquiry agents. A week afterwards he had put together enough of Lucilla's life between 1882 and 1894 to be sure of his case, including a copy of the entry in the Register of Baptisms at the Oxshott church . . . no father's name.

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Editorial Office of
The London Argus,
Davies Street, W.C.,
May 19, 1894.

Dear Mr. Dombey,—

I think I caught a glimpse of you on the platform at Cam-

bridge the other day, but as my train was only stopping for a minute I did not venture to recall myself to your remembrance.

I have heard with some interest that you are thinking of standing for Southampton West, when there is another election. I have a good deal to say, one way and another, in Southampton—almost my native place—and there are aspects of your candidature I should like to discuss with you. We very seldom run up against one another nowadays. My interests in the Stage seem to have begun just as yours left off!

When and where could I see you for a confidential talk?

Yours faithfully,
BAX STRANGEWAYS.

* * * * *

Dombey and Son (The "Flower" Line),
Fenchurch Street, E.C.,
May 20, 1894.

To Baxendale Strangeways, Esq.,
Office of *London Argus*.

SIR,—

I am directed by Mr. Dombey to say he will see you next Saturday afternoon, May 23rd, at 2.30 p.m., in his private room at the above address. He is unable to fix any other time owing to stress of business and occasional absence from London.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
J. PERCH.

* * * * *

On the Saturday morning in question, Paul arranged through his confidential secretary, Perch, that the staff should not be detained from the immediate enjoyment of their Saturday half-holiday, but be encouraged to hie away to their leafy suburbs after lunch. Sir Walter was at Poynings; the other partner, George Chick, devoted all Saturdays to golf at Crawley. Perch was requested to remain but not to interrupt a possibly stormy interview unless summoned by his bell. . . .

When he returned from lunch, Paul placed a straight, supple, tapering whip made of rhinoceros horn on the desk before him. (I had brought several of these home from East Africa some years before and had found them useful presents for men who rode, and who like Paul had shown me hospitality.)

Bax arrived punctually. The commissionaire showed him in and took up a seat on the landing outside the door, guided instinctively by some inflection in Paul's voice as the visitor entered.

Bax was immaculately over-dressed that day: a glossy topper, with curved brim and short crown; a frock-coat with full skirts and indication of a waist; a buff waistcoat and white slip; dark grey trousers, pearl-buttoned spats over boots, and thin buff gloves. He carried a stick with a heavy onyx knob.

His insolent eyes protruded a trifle more than usual from a brick-coloured face, and his full moustache bulged over his sensual lips, under a nose that was coarsened in outline from good living and much wine. He was a shorter man and more corpulent than William, an ugly likeness of that policeman-actor; who on his part had gained in refinement from his stage career.

"Be seated," said Paul, indicating a chair but not extending a hand. "You wished to see me . . . about my parliamentary candidature . . . ? Have you a vote for Southampton West ? "

"Well, not precisely; at least I don't think so; but I have considerable local interest and influence. . . . I mean . . . if I am not to waste time I had better be frank . . . (Paul assented) . . . I mean, Dombey, I could make your getting in a certainty . . . or . . . I could . . . the reverse. . . ."

"Yes ? . . ."

"Look here. Why couldn't we be friends—(Paul gave a slight shudder),—and close up all that musty old quarrel at Buenos Ayres . . . what was it ? Twenty, no, nineteen years ago ? You know your agent—glad he died afterwards of Yellow Jack—treated me damned badly, and the Firm would not give me a fair hearing."

"I don't," interjected Paul, "want to open up that business, except to say that my father went most carefully into the matter. As you say, it is many years ago—nineteen, I fancy. Besides, if your memory can go back so far, it was only one in a series of faults that my Firm had to find with you. . . ."

"No charge was made that I couldn't meet. Hang it all" (Bax's tone grew truculent), "I don't see why I should remain under a cloud any longer. 'Pon my word, when I think of it . . . chucked out on the streets of Buenos Ayres without

any reason. . . . Most men would have gone down and under. . . . Owe it to my own ability and force of character that I didn't . . . that I am what I am to-day: a power in the Press and a rich man, through my own exertions. . . . (He paused to pass a scented cambric handkerchief over his heated face.) "I am quite willing to bury the hatchet. . . . Look here. You're bringing out *Dombey and Son* as a Limited Liability, offering it to the Public. Give me Ten Thousand shares and make me a Director! I'll make it the biggest Shipping Firm on God's Earth" (Bax, like most people of his class, had no doubt whatever about the Deity). "Those are my terms!"

"Terms for what?" inquired Paul.

"Terms for letting bygones be bygones." (Bax paused to control a gulp in his throat. He was prone to self-pity. And as he paused, with the lightning rapidity of thought he saw Paul consenting, himself forgiving Paul, even liking this handsome, self-possessed, innately superior man; saw himself giving up all the *louche* and dirty side of his life, becoming a great force in the State; for of course he would dominate the Firm. His voice as he resumed became almost sympathetic. But Paul answered nothing.) "Terms for backing your issue in the Press. . . . Terms for . . . well, for putting the kibosh on my contributors who *will* send me spicy pars. about you—and—and the lady I saw you with at Cambridge. . . . I don't see why you shouldn't have your day out. . . . You only do what we all do. . . ."

Paul interrupted: "You mean Miss Lucilla Smith, by your allusions? . . . I had been to visit her mother who is an authority on planning gardens and has lately been advising us about ours in Sussex. Miss Smith kindly drove me to the station in her dog-cart. . . . And now I am afraid I must ask you to let me return to my work. There is apparently nothing for us to discuss."

"Then you won't do me justice—Won't make amends by bringing me into the new Company?"

"My partners will probably agree with me that there is no occasion for reopening the question of your dismissal nineteen years ago. You must, of course, take what action you please to clear your character, but I doubt if after nineteen years any action at law would lie. . . . (A pause) . . . As regards . . . your other amazing proposition, I can only look upon it as a sort of blackmail . . . especially as it is coupled with vague allusions as to what you might do if

you were displeased. I will put it before my partners, if you like, but you may prefer on second thoughts to withdraw it and trouble me no more."

"*Trouble you no more!*" said the blackmailer, choking with rage. "*That's* a good 'un! We'll see about *that!* It strikes me you're *asking* for trouble; and you shall have it, hot and strong. *I'll* show you up for what you are, you and your lady-loves on the stage and your bastards in the country. . . ." Paul rose to his feet with a bound, the rhinoceros whip close at hand. Bax struck out with his onyx-knobbed stick, and though its blow failed of its intended effect on the bridge of Paul's nose, it bruised his cheek.

In an instant Paul had whirled the stick out of Bax's hand, had caught him by the coat collar, wrenched him round, dug his knuckles into the bully's neck, half choking him, forced him down over the arm-chair on which he had been sitting; and despite his kicks and clutchings was giving him a masterly caning with the supple rhinoceros wand; one which penetrated through clothes and underclothes to the skin.

In two or more minutes of tense silence, broken only by Bax's gurglings, Paul's berserker rage had left him. With one last contraction of his muscles he hurled the whipped man towards the door of his office, where he fell prone on the oil-cloth, dribbling, bleeding from a bitten tongue, running at the nose, and nearly in a fit, with blood to the head and semi-strangulation.

Paul pushing back his cuffs, smoothed his clothes and his ruffled hair, and, pulling collar and tie straight, all in a minute, peremptorily pressed the bell that summoned the commissionaire. The latter entered, nearly stumbling over the still gasping Bax on all-fours.

"Roberts," said Paul, already almost calm, "take this gentleman downstairs. There is his hat . . . in that corner. . . . Call a cab and see him into it."

Roberts, quite unmoved, assisted the rumpled Bax to his feet, gathered up the hat, tendered it to him, and led him out. In the hall he brushed him down. Bax, proffering never a word of explanation or thanks, wiped his bleeding mouth with the scented handkerchief, got into the four-wheeler and snarled out the address of the flat (not his home) where he was living with the woman of the moment.

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Editorial Office,
The London Argus,
Davies Street, W.C.,
May 25, 1894.

DEAR GAY-DOMBEY,—

When I called at your office the other day for a chat about your parliamentary candidature in Hampshire, I seem to have chanced on you after a more than usually stimulating lunch, or at some time of domestic worries. My few questions roused you to maniacal violence and I was obliged to defend myself, I fear with some damage to your face and to my stick. Things might have fared badly with me if your shocked commissionaire had not opportunely come to my rescue.

In the melée the stick seems to have disappeared. Kindly search for it and return it to me, as it is of some value. It has an onyx knob—you can't mistake it. There is not another like it in all London. It was given to me by the President of Mexico.

You ought to consult a specialist about these fits of rage. They are probably pathological. At the same time they are hardly a recommendation in a parliamentary candidate, as I shall point out to my friends in Southampton West. We shall meet again at Philippi!

Yours ever,
BAX STRANGEWAYS.

P.S. He is a good-looking boy! I should have spotted the relationship anywhere. I hope he doesn't inherit your fiery disposition. I see in the register at Oxshott he was christened "Rupert. . . ." After *her* father, I presume? What does Diana think of all this? But perhaps she allows you the run of the Home? Naughty, naughty!

* * * * *

When his shoulders and stern were less painful, Bax thought he would look in on his chum, Sir James Tudell, find out what the latter had heard about the scuffle, and intimate his resolve on a long-drawn-out and deadly vengeance. But he met with a reception that took him aback.

"Look here, Bax. You've often made a fool of yourself, but never so big a fool as when you tried to blackmail Paul Dombey. Strikes me," (the sense that he was now an M.P. coming uppermost) "you're on the down grade. You'll have to pull yerself up if you aren't coming to grief and getting on the wrong side of the Law. Don't look to me for help or

backing if you play the giddy goat and get singed. We've done some deals together in the past. . . . I ain't ashamed of 'em. You've done your work as press agent and you've had your price. But you leave the Dombeys alone, d'you hear? Or you'll suddenly come upon me round the corner, ready to give you a thick ear, like I did. . . . When was it? . . . But I don't want to rake up disagreeable memories. . . . Bax: how is it? You're a wrong 'un! . . . Now there's William. . . ."

"If it comes to that, so are you! . . ."

"P'raps I am; p'raps most of us are, 'cept those that ain't found out. But you're an out-an-out wrong 'un . . . Why is it? Why can't you keep straight? Look 'ow you're treatin' that pore wife of yours. . . ."

"Oh Hell! Shut up. Why, gossip says *you* are running three families at once! . . ."

Sir James laughed loud and heartily. "Does it, though! Well! *Well! What'll* they say next? But you know really, you're a licker to me. You've got brains . . . better than mine, better than most people's I've met. T'hear you talk, who'd ever guess you'd worked your way up? You ain't a gentleman, nor ever will be. But you can *write*. That I don't deny. Why, I give your new book of stories to my old woman, and she says 'beautiful, beautiful' over some of 'em, reglar cried over some and didn't spot the rorty bits. . . . Well: hang it all! Why don't you *keep* straight? Drop that Mrs. Warrenne, drop your blackmailin', make your paper decent. It's smart enough. . . ."

Bax at this flung himself out of Tudell's presence, or liked to think he did. But the effects of the whipping were still so provocative of pain and stiffness that there was more of a slink than a fling about his withdrawal.

Thereafter his direct attacks and unmistakable allusions to Paul ceased in the *London Argus*. Dombey and Son was not, after all, floated as a public concern, so his projected diatribes on watered capital and out-of-date ships had to be indefinitely postponed. For before Paul took the decisive step of turning the great shipping business from a private to a limited liability Company, events had occurred which seemed likely to furnish the old firm with an ultimate heir to carry on the business in the old traditions. But by word of mouth, Bax never lost an opportunity of blackening Paul's name, when he could do so safely "within the law." He circulated among his vast circle of acquaintances his version of the relations

between Paul and Lucilla and the parentage of Rupert Smith, and did his worst at Southampton West to injure Paul's candidature. He may have deflected a few votes, though the constituency was not one deeply affected by questions of morality. Paul lost the 1895 election mainly over Sir William Grandcourt's Licensing Bill, and because he was a Mentmore Liberal ; couldn't go all the way with Home Rule, yet favoured some very Radical measures in Home legislation. The Conservatives would like to have voted for him because he was really " their sort " and " one of us " and a great Imperialist, in acts as well as professions ; but couldn't stomach his support of the Death Duties or his threats to the Public House.

Bax turned his wicked wits now to a more profitable game, that of exploiting those who exploited Africa, Asia and South America. The Rubber Boom was just beginning, with the success of the pneumatic tyre.

And as to Lucilla :

So lasting was the consternation caused by Bax's direct attack in the preceding May, that she left for America without bidding Paul good-bye. Indeed, except for chance meetings in Society she never saw him again or Diana either, and she took ship from Liverpool for New York in September, 1894.

This detachment was not only out of consideration for both her friends, but she was greatly absorbed in her preparations. The American engagement meant, if successful, so much money that it might leave her in the 'forties of her life independent of monetary wants, with enough capital to start Rupert in a career. Although only engaged definitely for one year, with all expenses of her company guaranteed, there was an additional option on the part of Messrs. Fröhling and Stockenheim for a further four years to be decided by the result of the first year's touring.

Lucilla was placed on a rank only second to Sara Bernhardt. She was to engage her own company in England and even, if she chose, equip herself with scenery and costumes ; so that she might land at N' York ready to begin her Shakespearean plays a week afterwards.

The delight and satisfaction over such importance and power ; the pleasure at being able to give an opportunity to ambitious young men and women, or to stretch a helping hand out to those of middle age who feared they had failed : the chance of imposing her own ideas as to rendering at rehearsals, as to scenery, costume, music : all these occupations of mind

between May and September shook up the love-lorn woman of forty, out of a silly dream. Sex-gratification retired to the background : indeed she felt indignant with herself for having perhaps jeopardized Paul's ambitions. He, too, wished to be great in his own way.

* * * * *

The tour was proving a wonderful success. Boston, Worcester, Providence, Hartford, New Haven : golden memories of a sunny October ; New England at its best : so cordial, so cultivated, so kind—a whole string of gracious adjectives rose to her lips from an overcharged heart. The good feeding brought a becoming plumpness to her fellow actresses and a full chestedness to her rather lean young men. Her company either regained its youth or assumed a becoming maturity.

Then New York in November, a November sparkling with early frosts which permitted her to wear beautiful furs, yet gay still with the golden tags and rags of Autumn. New York still seemed a provincial city, though the mighty sky-scrapers which were to impart to it the majesty of a Brobdingnagian metropolis were rising above the belated Gothic churches and classical façades. Its hotels still bore traces of nineteenth century homeliness and plush, but the cuisine was magnificent. Even then New York laid before the gastronome a more glorious range of good things to eat and drink than any European capital could do.

It had been decided that the first half of December should be passed in Washington, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Then the *Lucilla Smith Company* should be whirled south in a special train of parlour cars, sleepers, restaurant and luggage vans to New Orleans and Florida. The January performances in Florida were to coincide with the first winter season at new, paradisiac resorts, just opened up, and framed to knock the Riviera hollow. Here on shores that had known the Spaniard and the Frenchman in Shakespeare's own century and before his day, where a Spanish street or the ruin of a Huguenot fort still lingered : here in a new Italy of orange groves and myrtle, cypresses and lemon orchards, mid-winter roses and bougainvillea, Lucilla would, with her magic voice, her Renaissance costumes, lure young and rich America into the illusion that it had slipped back three hundred years in time and simultaneously crossed three thousand miles of ocean to the kindred lands of enchantment round the Mediterranean. This January of 1895 in Florida was a long-looked-forward-to occasion for indulging the love of romance and beauty, welling up in

New England. The bookings were as complete as for any Oberammergau passion play. All the new hotels were prospectively full, all the villas were taken and furnished.

But Lucilla was not to live to reach this triumph. Shakespeare in the Orange Groves of Florida was at best to be given by a nerve-shattered troupe, bereft of its queen and of several important and humble members, replaced *tant bien que mal* at short notice by general utility artistes from New York.

* * * * *

It was Christmas time as Lucilla's train bumped its way along the single, ill-laid line of rails that passed from Washington through Virginia and along the eastern flank of the Alleghanies. Washington they had left under moonlight, a winter city, pitilessly wide in its open spaces, two feet deep in snow, the one-storied depôt almost buried in snow. As the train passed on twelve hours later, the snow had melted on the twigs and branches of the innumerable trees, then had refrozen, so that they seemed to be trundling through a forest of spun glass, exquisitely rosy or iridescent under the rays of the westering sun. . . . The next day pine forests took up the chief rôle in the landscape. Then pines and magnolias and evergreen oaks, with vast tracts of open country, grateful to the eye with still lingering mauve asters, brilliant golden rod, magenta-coloured berries of the "French mulberry," creamy white tufts of sage brush and the pinkish-green foam of the dog fennel.

Small towns clustered round the ramshackle depôts—timber houses mostly, perhaps in the distance an ambitious courthouse in stone or stucco, and generally a jarring, foolish name ending in "-ville."

Then fields of cotton, ugly and blackened by the harvest and the winter.

Then stagnant swamps, bayous, gigantic trees plumed and draped with Spanish moss. Then more spaces of sage brush and dog fennel.

It was the second night of the journey. Lucilla had had a merry dinner with five of her company. After dinner they had repaired to the observation car, for the weather was fairly mild, and had smoked their cigarettes on rocking chairs whence they could peer out at the twinkling stars and the rising moon on the wane. . . . Then she went to her own special sleeping compartment beyond her parlour car. Her maid-dresser prepared her for bed. As always, for safety, she slept with her precious pearl necklace round her neck.

Though it was the Great Southern Line, it was but a single line, then—as no doubt now. Then, as no doubt now, American signalmen or depôt superintendents were sometimes careless. Now they are stern teetotallers ; then they were sometimes muzzy with whisky. The advent of special trains was occasionally overlooked ; mineral trains at night slipped through from sidings on to the main line and forged ahead with American recklessness, trusting to luck not to meet another train coming from the reverse direction. . . .

* * * * *

BANG ! ! BUMP ; SURGE . . . CRASH—SH—SH . . . SMASH —SH—SH—And Lucilla entered upon the most dreadful dream she was ever to know. For long it was confused and interrupted by spells of unconsciousness, by intervals of velvet blackness in which she seemed to be screaming without intermission . . . or was it the engine whistling ? Or the shrieking of escaping steam ? Or men and women raising a vast yell in chorus, to which she contributed ? . . . Her eyes at last seemed to gaze on actuality and not on a dream-phantasmagoria. Was she in bed ? Perhaps. But no, she was pressed down not by sheet and blankets and duvet, but by timbers, planks, cushions. Her body was immobile and senseless. One hand—her left—which showed above the débris and was made visible in the red, red glare of light that now conquered the darkness, had some sensibility, and she could just move the fingers. In doing so her aching eyes glanced suddenly on her two rings : one the plain gold band she wore to suggest the harmless falsehood of her widowhood, the other that she had called her " engagement ring," a row of beautiful yellow topazes which had been given her long ago by Paul. She remembered looking at it now—they had chosen it at Bénézet's in Paris. It matched her " lioness " eyes, Paul said . . . Paul ! Who was " Paul " ? . . . Oh yes, of course. . . . And she ? Where was she ? What was this nameless horror ? Not dead, surely ? Dead and in Hell ? Surely there was no truth in the silly old fables about an angry God fussing over trifles and inflicting Hell torment in punishment ? Yet all round there was the red glare and hot breath of a vast fire. Sparks, burning specks of wood, every now and then fell on her face and hurt acutely . . . and she could raise no hand to brush them off. One red-hot fragment had fallen on an eye-brow ; perhaps had burnt the hair off ! Ugh ! How it would disfigure her !

She was less deaf now, and could hear the crackling of wood.

The sense of smell had returned and she was conscious of the odour of burning wood and varnish. And amid the roaring of the flames and crackling of the tree branches there were human voices . . . terrible moans, shouts for help, screams of agony, wild laughter. Some one was saying, "Oh, *thank* God! Oh, *thank* God! that's released me—just in time—the Fire was getting too close. . . ." Then another dark unconsciousness swallowed up Lucilla. When she next opened her eyes it was in response to a choking douche of water. People were sousing her and abating the red glare with hissing streams of water from a hydrant. But oh, *How* delicious! What Dives must have craved from Lazarus. She was only a head. She was dying for a certainty, but she would not die in hell. Presently the things which held her down were lifted . . . slowly . . . entanglingly . . . gingerly. She knew that, not by any relief to her crushed body, but because they no longer pressed on her throat and chest. The cold, sharp, frosty air further revived her senses. . . .

That surely was Minnie Freshfield bending over her?—"Minnehaha" they had nicknamed her for her constant laughter at American novelties in speech and manner—Minnie Freshfield who played the Nerissa parts . . . Minnehaha . . . yes, in a blackened nightdress with a man's rough coat over her shoulders. She was saying, "I *know* it's Lucilla!! Oh *dear, dear* Miss Smith. . . . It's *Lucilla*. . . . Look at her pearls! . . ."

Lucilla could hear and see; perhaps she could speak. She feebly passed her tongue over the cracked, scorched lips. The blessed water had trickled into her mouth. She held Minnie with unwavering eyes for a few minutes and said with infinite difficulty in a raucous whisper, said it several times to make it more and more distinct: "Give—Diana—my—love, and give her my boy. . . . You hear? Diana, remember—Give Diana my love—and—I give—her my—son—Rupert."

* * * * *

She was dead before they could lift her on to the stretcher. They left the pearls about her neck and her night garment to serve as her shroud. The weeping Minnehaha was her jealous guard and never left the dead woman till she was reverently encased in a coffin, to be sent across the Atlantic. Minnie knew—and held to it so obstinately that the dying woman might have told her by telepathy—that it was in England she must be buried.

Thither, if there was aught of her personality that had not

died with the body, and which the Earth could hold within its influence—thither to England you may be sure her spirit had fled with the rapidity of light; and with the certainty of a homing pigeon had nestled in the arms of the sleeping Paul: Paul now about to awake from the profound morning sleep of a healthy man, to extend a hand, turn on the electric light on the bed-stand, look at his watch and remark that it was half-past seven.

He yawned, stretched himself luxuriously, and turned about to glance at Diana. She was lying awake, looking up into the canopy. "Paul! I've had such a curious dream about Lucilla Smith. It is all slipping from me now . . . but I know she was wanting to give me something. . . . Wasn't it curious?"

Paul who always found a mention of Lucilla irksome on Diana's part only grunted, and said Saunders must have been getting his bath ready by this time. It was still dark outside, but he thought he would get up as there would be a long day in the City, a finishing-up day before the Christmas week.

* * * * *

He was returning from his lunch at the City Liberal Club. Boys on the glistening pavement were crying out the early editions of the evening papers. . . . 'Orrible Railway Hacci-dent—United States—Hactress—burnt—to—death——"

"Psha!" said Paul to himself. "How they do pile up horrors in the States! Why don't they double their main lines and manage things better? Poor thing—wonder who she was?" Then—"Actress" and "United States" gave a horrible clue, like a stab of pain. . . . "Lucilla!"

"Boy! Give me a *Westminster*."

"Yessir."

He folded it inside out. Great and less great headlines and the first four lines of the telegraphic summary told him all he could take in. He shivered through his frame. In the hansom driving home with a livid face he read it over again with more attention.

"Diana! Any one with you?"

"No, Paul. Why, dear? Are you ill?"

"Yes, in mind. But I don't want to be dramatic. I—we—have had some bad news. Have you seen the evening papers?"

"No. I usually keep them for when I am dressing for dinner and Maconochie is doing my hair. . . ."

"Well, come to my study. . . . Oh, and . . . were we going out to-night?"

"Yes, to the Parrys, to meet Dumaurier. Don't you remember?"

"I remember nothing. But send a telegram, a telephone, a servant with a note to say we can't come—unwell—anything you like. And tell Maconochie she can spend the evening with her cousin. Otherwise she always comes interrupting whenever we try to have a confidential talk."

Paul strode to his study and paced up and down. Diana went to give the necessary instructions and joined him. He locked the door. "Can't help what the servants think. This is one of those occasions on which one cannot *tolerate* an interruption. Diana—read this."

Diana read half aloud with increasing emotion :—

TERRIBLE RAILWAY ACCIDENT IN GEORGIA, U.S.A.

DEATH OF CELEBRATED ENGLISH ACTRESS AND OTHER SHOCKING CASUALTIES.

A special train, conveying Miss Lucilla Smith's Shakespearean Company from Washington to New Orleans, collided with an up train which by some error was travelling in the reverse direction. The second train was only one of mineral trucks. Both trains were flung off the line. The wreckage of the special train caught fire, and several deaths resulted, though considering the severity of the accident the loss of life was slight. Amongst the killed was the gifted actress, Miss Lucilla Smith, whose renderings of Shakespearean heroines have delighted two hemispheres for the last ten years.

Miss Smith's spine was broken and her body pinned down by the wreckage of her sleeping compartment. But happily she was rescued before the fire reached her. She was then conscious and said very distinctly to Miss Freshfield (a member of her Company, and fortunately not seriously hurt) : "Give my love to Diana, and give her my boy—Rupert." She repeated these words more than once, but died as they were lifting her on to the stretcher. It is supposed by Miss Freshfield that the "Diana" of Miss Smith's last utterance is Mrs. Paul Dombey, the wife of the great shipping magnate, who is so respected a member of London Society and who has interested herself for many years in the welfare of women on the stage. Miss Smith for years past had been one of Mrs. Dombey's intimate friends. She leaves a little boy to mourn her, who at present resides with his grandmother.

But not only did this deplorable accident—apparently due to gross carelessness—cost the British stage the loss of one of its most brilliant ornaments, but we also have to record the death of a gifted young actor, Mr. Harold Skimpole-Andrews, and one of the veterans of the stage, Mrs. Julia Delancey, whose rendering of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* was one of the richest expositions of Elizabethan comedy, etc., etc., etc.

Diana looked up from her reading with a few tears running down her cheeks. "How dreadful! How *perfectly dreadful!* But . . . of course I had a great regard for Lucilla Smith, as I've often told you . . . but I never thought I was so much in her mind; I don't think I've ever seen her boy. She always seemed very reticent about him and I didn't like to press my questions. . . . One never knows. . . . Her mother . . . that must have been the Mrs. Rupert Smith at —at—Skimpole?—no, Wimpole—who sent us plans and designs for our garden at Goring. . . . Why, *Paul,* my darling! How this has affected you. . . ."

Paul had thrown himself on an unsympathetic leather sofa and was shaken with sobs. . . .

"Diana . . ." forcing himself to be calm, with teeth that clacked: "Diana, you must brace yourself for more. You must know all there is to be known, and hear it from me. . . . I *loved* Lucilla—once—and . . . I am the boy's father. . . ."

Diana straightened herself in the arm-chair and let him speak. He told her the whole story, kneeling at last beside her, and as she took and held his hand, bowed his face at last on her knees.

"Paul . . . don't give way so or you will be ill. . . . Paul—this is not the knock-down blow it might have been to me some years ago. . . . People used to hint things . . . sometimes sent me newspaper paragraphs. But I used to laugh about it and say I would trust you *anywhere,* and—— Now that I know, I forgive you. Never did that French saying seem so true . . . that one I've quoted so often about my poor girls at the Hostel: Tout savoir c'est tout pardonner." . . . (He kissed her hands convulsively.) "This has upset you dreadfully and we have both got much to do. Go to your dressing-room—Go to bed—I will come and sit with you presently. I will write to your mother that we can't come down for Christmas this year. To-morrow we must go to where the boy is . . . with his grandmother. If she will consent, he shall be my son . . . as he is yours. Now I understand Lucilla's message."

CHAPTER XIX

1895-1897

IN the beautiful Wimpole wilderness alongside the great abandoned park of the Rackstraws, which had grown into one of those sylvan tangles of French fairy tales, Mrs. Rupert Smith never saw an evening paper. The morning papers which on this eventful day in Rupert's short life were to be so full of the tragedy of his mother's death were not delivered by a dilatory Smith's boy till mid-day or even later. So Paul and Diana, coming down to forestall them by an early train to Royston, got to the cottage in a lumbering fly before Mrs. Rupert Smith had any inkling of the dreadful news.

Paul before starting had cabled to any and every one in the States who could furnish information or enforce his wish that Lucilla's body might be sent to England for burial. He had left directions at Portland Place that if any answers came before his return they were to be sent on telegraphically to Wimpole.

They broke the news to Mrs. Rupert Smith as best they could. The sight of Diana coming with her husband had prepared her to receive *some* shock. But the boy . . . how could they tell him, as he came bounding in on learning that his god-father had arrived . . . eager for news of "Mummy"? He had idolized his mother and only her assurances that she would not be away for long and would return with such lots of money that they could ever afterwards live happily together, had saved him from fretting and begging her in every one of his text-hand letters to come back.

Paul took Mrs. Rupert out into the garden, where she might give way freely to her grief. And as they paced the sodden grass paths along the empty herbaceous borders—or, as they sat apart in the little study with the seed catalogues, the walls of which were covered with so many mementos of Lucilla's stage triumphs; he tried to assuage his agony and hers by discussing the arrangements that might be made for Rupert's future. Of course there would be no break with his grandmother. He could live with her, especially whilst he remained

at the Cambridge school, and she could visit them and him whenever she chose at Portland Place or by the sea at Goring. In fact, Mrs. Smith, when she had recovered from her grief, and spring made gardening possible, might instal herself at Goring and really complete their elaborately designed garden.

But Paul and Diana would formally adopt Lucilla's boy. By and bye he might add the name of Dombey to his other surname and become the " Son " in Dombey and Son—ill-fated, yet time-honoured combination of words, typical of the clinging of humanity to continuity.

Rupert's weeping in his utter abandonment of grief melted the very last icicle of puritanism and primness in Diana's heart. She cried with him : tears were their best introduction to one another. Yet as she dabbed her eyes with a very wet and very inadequate pocket-handkerchief she felt strangely happy. Lucilla in dying had bestowed on her the greatest gift : motherhood. She gloried in the thought that she had become, even by substitution, the mother of Paul's son. She would be henceforth a perfectly happy woman . . . for twenty years . . . till the War came which was to shatter the happiness of millions of mothers and wives. . . . Even then in her declining years there would be the consolation of her grandchildren . . . by adoption.

The papers that were full of the tragedy of Lucilla Smith's death in the holidays round about the Christmas of 1894 were so soon given over to other topics—the outcome of the Sino-Japanese war, the growing dissidence between Lord Mentmore and Sir William Grandcourt, and the unwomanly conduct of women who wished to ride bicycles in knickerbockers—that I have only found one reference to Lucilla's burial in Goring Churchyard. I think it is from the *Morning Post*—no : it is the *Daily Graphic*, because it was accompanied by a pen-drawing of the scene. It relates how the remains of the great actress having reached England, they were conveyed to the little village of Goring in West Sussex and there were interred in the presence of Mrs. Rupert Smith, Master Rupert Smith (son of the deceased lady), Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dombey whose country residence was close by, Sir Walter and Lady Gay-Dombey of Poynings, Lady Feenix, the Honble. Lady March (wife of the well-known judge), Mr. and Mrs. William Strangeways, and Miss Minnie Freshfield, who had accompanied the coffin of her friend and colleague from the United States to its last resting-place in English earth.

(Miss Freshfield, or Minnehaha, it might be added, went to stay with poor forlorn Mrs. Rupert at Wimpole, and took such a violent liking to gardening and cage-birds that she filled in some way Lucilla's place and only left Lucilla's mother a few years later to marry a gentleman farmer of contiguous land, whose derelict estate she turned into a nursery garden yielding a hundred per cent. profit yearly.)

* * * * *

Fort Mentmore,
Ubunyanza,
June 2, 1895.

Dear Suzanne,—

. . . Since you insist on the cousinship by adoption—and indeed it is sweet of you to do so—I will no longer be bearish and repel your friendship, for spleen that it is no more than friendship. I am so alone in the world now that I enrol myself henceforth as your cousin and thank you for your goodness to a derelict like myself. . . .

After being six months without mails, imagine me now staring at a great heap of newspapers, reviews, pamphlets, books, on the floor—despatches and letters on my camp table: hardly knowing where to begin! I seized your letter first, recognizing the dear handwriting. Perhaps there are more of your letters in the packets, and later news. But as the messengers who brought these mail bags from Nyasaland must return at once, and as I have all too little time in which to write both to you and to the F.O., I will just go straight at the heart of the matter. I won't tell you much about myself and what I have done—herculean things!—in the last nine or ten months, because my long postponed Report to H.M. Govt. goes by this mail, and Lord Feenix—how shocked he would be if I called him "Cousin John!"—perhaps I will when I return!—is sure to get a squint at it before it is served up as a blameless blue book. (There are some pronouncements on the Ubunyanza Company, Chartered and Limited, that the Govt. may decide to delete.)

It is enough to tell you I am well; and that I hope to return to England early next year, when we have finally suppressed the Slave Traders and opened up a safe road to Lake Nyasa. Johnston—or as the natives call him, "Joséni"—is back at Zomba and we are trying to combine forces. The Germans also are co-operating. . . .

Your news about Lucilla Smith was awful. I did not know her well, though I thought her very attractive and singularly

" young." She was so nice that time—how long ago it seems ! at Tewkesbury. The mystery of her boy's paternity is quite sufficiently cleared up. Let us hope a little oblivion will be poured over the affair and that people will soon get used to regarding young Rupert as Paul's real son and heir. . . .

D. behaved nobly. I never did her justice. Perhaps she never realized what a fine character *I* am. The Quakers—isn't she one ?—are most inconsistent ! They urge me to put down the Slave trade, yet reprove me the next month for using force. I wish they would come out themselves and try persuasion. . . . As to your brother's message : it touched me to the quick. I mean, his saying they kept a vacancy for me on their board, against the time when I should retire and want a little money to supplement the meagre pension which they will allot me when I am worn out. Fortunately, as you know, my mother left me not at all badly off. . . . I like to think this, too, came out of Dombey and Son !

The first paper I tore open after glancing through your letter was a *Punch*. I see it refers to the present Government as " ploughing the sands. . . ." Neither Lord Mentmore nor Lord Thetford seem quite to make up their minds to an African policy. Report—native and European—says some very odd things are preparing to be sprung on us in South Africa. . . . I expect when I return it will be to find Lord W. back at the F.O. I hope so. And Lord Feenix at the C.O. ? Or will it be Choselwhit ?

Tudell's agents—I mean the Ubunyanza Co.'s men—are a variegated lot. Some of them are splendid chaps ; others are ruffians. And the malaria germs discriminate so badly ! The good sort is prone to go off quickly with blackwater fever and the bad lot to resist most diseases and much whisky. . . . *Até logo* and in haste. . . .

EUSTACE.

Deerhurst Park, by Tewkesbury,
September 10, 1895.

DEAR EUSTACE,—

Your letter of June is just to hand. Three months from the heart of Africa to sleepy Gloucestershire isn't bad. How it would have astonished Livingstone ! How interesting, too, that your headquarters should be at one of his old camps !

* * * * *

Here we are once more, given over to that tiresome partridge shooting. " We " are in power again, since the Liberals

threw up the sponge at the end of June ; but *we* are out of it just now. When Lord W. formed his new ministry—you will now know that the Conservatives and Unionists swept the board at the General Election last month—he offered my poor John that consolation prize, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, and hinted that he would do even more for him if he took pleasantly Chocho's striding across him—give him a step in the peerage presently. Feenix declined the consolation prize (he really thought he might have gone to the F.O. since Lord W. is coy about taking that for himself), but what he most wants is to be made an Earl—he is quite *toqué* on the subject, wants to be a "great noble"—and to provide for such state he is bent on making money. He went on Tudell's board some time ago and is to be the Chairman of the Ubunyanza Co. I hope that won't create complications with you! I know you look on this Company rather dubiously. . . . Every one now is beginning to talk of Rubber, and it is reported that the Congo Basin—which includes Ubunyanza, doesn't it ?—is simply full of rubber and all the natives have got to do is to bring it in for sale. . . .

Victor has passed into Sandhurst, mainly on a stammering knowledge of the Greek Testament, so far as I can learn. He certainly trailed about with a dog's-eared version of it in the Spring, using the most shocking language about the Evangelists. John wants him to get a commission in the 1st Life Guards. He promises to attain the ideal figure of a Lifeguardsman in a few years, though he still looks all knees and elbows and lanky legs. He and Edith and Walter no longer affect that custom that used to irritate you so of calling cousin to all the peerage and baronetage—— No, I think they left the Baronets out to annoy me, because I was sensitive about Father.[1] They are now *à la mode du jour*—following the Brinsleys, the other Molyneuxes, and the rest of the smart noblesse—by giving every one they care to know or mention a nick-name. This is considered very esoteric, very puzzling to "outsiders," but comprehended at all the best country houses. So that in place of Cousin Edward, Aunt Ermyntrude, Uncle Douglas, we now have—as far as I can remember such inanities—"Niggs," "Grogro," "Marrowfat," "Pooey," "Market-cart," "Doodles," "Cabby," "Dodo," and "Humpty."

[1] Sir Walter Gay-Dombey was made a Baronet in 1895 by the outgoing Mentmore ministry in recognition of his services to British shipping and Imperial commerce.

Forgive my wasting space in recording such rubbish ; but you like to follow these psychological developments.

And what about all this excess of athleticism ? Whither is it going to lead us ? " In women, my dear Lady, to atrophy of the uterus," was the rather embarrassing reply of Sir William Goodenough when he came down—more as a friend than a surgeon—to see me about Carinthia's back. (He thinks she will quite outgrow this weakness : I am *so* relieved : she is more darling to me than ever.) Lady Tudell was at lunch—I persuaded her this year to accompany Sir James—and was inexpressibly shocked at such plain speaking ; it brought the eczema out worse than ever. But really I think Sir William is right. Edith at 21 is all bone and sinew and whipcord muscles. (Still : what about working women and labourers' wives ?)

Yet I believe she is going to be engaged to Lord Willowby, the Kidderminsters' eldest son. He is enthusiastic about her riding, her hockey, her bowling at cricket and her championship (Gloucester Ladies' Cup) in tennis. His father—Lord Kidderminster—is one of those maddening purity crusaders—a great ally of Lady Towcester's. Even Stead has got a little bit sick of him.

To preserve his own chastity as a young man he went in clamorously for every kind of blameless sport and now forces his boys to do the same. At the same time he won't leave women alone . . . particularly those that are véreuses. Diana had really to *ask* him to cease visiting her " Hostel " ; he was drawing it into disagreeable notoriety. It was he that amused all Regent's Park last Spring—he lives in one of those big terraces—by issuing hand-bills enjoining on you to " Feed Hungry Girls," " Follow Lonely Girls," " Give Good Counsel to Sad and Sickly Girls," and so on. He nearly got into trouble by trying to follow his own maxims. The Home Secretary had to circulate a description of him among the N.W. Police to prevent his being taken up ! . . .

Well, Edith seems coolly contented with her young man, and of course in a worldly way it is a very good match, so John gives it his high approval.

Walter is bent on joining you out in Africa some day. It was very kind of you to write him about elephant shooting.

Carry has taken a tremendous liking to young Rupert Smith, Paul's and Diana's adopted son. He and his parents are also staying here. Oddly enough, Paul *likes* partridge shooting. Rupert is such a handsome boy, more like Paul

than Lucilla, yet with a flash of Lucilla in his eyes, which are a fiery hazel. Although he is two years younger than Carry, he looks actually older ; he is big for twelve. But he is a distinctly *nice* boy : manly and polite at one and the same time, and an ideal companion for her, as she tends to be unduly languorous. Walter, at home for the holidays and already a good shot, approves of Rupert thoroughly. . . . Diana sends you " her best regards " : I *wrung* it out of her.

Your affectionate Cousin,

SUZANNE.

* * * * *

Eustace does not get this letter till Christmas, 1895, and for several days, after it and other private correspondence is put on his bed table or between his nerveless, bony, yellow fingers, he cannot read it. He has been through a nearly fatal attack of blackwater fever and his sight is still too weak to read. But he lies back under the mosquito curtain, tranquil and hopeful. Before succumbing to this overdose of malaria he has inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tanganyika Slave Traders ; and his Public Works Department has completed the last link in the Overland telegraph which now—thanks to Cecil Rhodes's energy and expenditure—links up Central Africa with the civilized world. Eustace has flashed his victories over the wires to London, and Lord W. has flashed back congratulations and a K.C.M.G., hopes for his recovery, and leave whenever he likes to take it.

The simultaneous good fortune of our arms in Nyasaland opens for him a quick way to the Indian Ocean and home through the Suez Canal ; which was at the time fortunate, since the uprising of the Matebele against the Chartered Company had temporarily closed the Cape route.

By the end of April, 1896, he is back in London and very soon in confabulation with Suzanne. From her he hears that Arthur Broadmead is ill and is in *déchéance,* compromised, it is thought, over the Jacobszoon Raid. Eustace at once determines to seek him out. Enquiry at the C.O. from a rather sulky, suspicious Snodgrass reveals the fact that Arthur is—has been—ill and not at the Office for several weeks. He remembers of old where his dwelling was and goes to see him one deliriously bright morning at the beginning of May.

Arthur Broadmead lived in a unique abode which was situated near the juncture of Ebury Street with Hamilton Place. (It was recently swept away at the death of its last

tenant.) It had been probably a park lodge or a Regency *cottage orné* a hundred or more years ago, when Buckingham Palace stood on the borders of the open country, of the snipe haunted fields that sloped down over Belgravia to the Thames and stretched to the village of Brompton. It was a two-storied house with kitchen and cellars in the basement, four large rooms on the ground floor and four small rooms above. Originally there was a narrow, walled-in garden, but more than half of this had been enclosed with glass and iron and a tessellated floor by some luxurious tenant in the 'sixties, to form a studio, or "lounge," or billiard room. The tiny garden that remained contained two plane trees, a gravelled square between them, and three borders of garden soil packed with bulbs in the spring and nourishing in the summer standard rose bushes, renewed by a nurseryman whenever they showed sign of suffering from London smoke.

The studio had been greatly improved by Broadmead. It was perfectly warmed in winter, was furnished with luxurious divans and easy chairs, tiger skins and Persian rugs on its tessellated floor, two orange-trees in tubs on castors (so that they could be wheeled easily into the garden on sunny days), one round table for meals in the European fashion and several inlaid Turkish tables for tea, for cigarettes or long drinks. The anterior part of this "salon à tout faire" was really a portion of the house cut off the dining-room. It contained a bureau for writing, a safe built into a wall, bookshelves, cupboards and recesses for comestibles, drinks and smokes. The remaining half of the little dining-room had become a library with all the wall-space, except where there was the one high window, filled with bookshelves tightly packed with books, or with cabinets for storing papers. The twin sitting-room was turned into a luxurious bathroom, and on the opposite side of the narrow hall there were two ground-floor bedrooms, Broadmead's and that of any friend to whom he might offer hospitality. The four small upstairs rooms were the domain of his excellent servants, Mr. and Mrs. Baigent. (I take some pleasure in describing these felicitously arranged quarters for a quiet but luxurious bachelor in London, because Eustace Morven succeeded Broadmead as their occupant, and in later days I frequently visited him to have long talks on Africa and more than once was his tenant.) To add to the coquetry of this place it was almost undiscernible from the outside. Behind it to the north rose lofty-stucco buildings, of which it merely seemed a two-storied,

chimneyed appendage. The main entrance was simply through a plain non-committal door in a blank wall.

The discreet and equally non-committal Baigent opened this door to Eustace, and at first said that Mr. Broadmead was too ill to see any one, but scanning the card and remembering, thought an exception might be made in his case; showed him at any rate into the library and after the briefest interval into the "lounge."

"My dear Eustace . . . what a treat to see your honest face again! . . . You've aged a little . . . but not so much as I have. I can't get up to clap you on the back. I'm nearly done for with influenza . . . and other things that have come on too . . . and rather shaky on my pins. Congratulations, by the bye, on your K.C.M.G.—if you care about such gawds . . . but of course you do. Every one likes at some stage of their lives to change their name and style.

"Now it's *awfully* good of you to come and see me . . . the *one and only* person I wanted to see . . . I'm very sick . . . so you must give in to my wish and spend the day with me. I'll release you at six. My doctor comes then and Baigent has to put me in bed. If you've got engagements, there's a telephone in the library. Baigent will show you how to work it—and you can put them off; I can give you lunch here—*tant bien que mal*—and before and after lunch we can talk. At least *I* can talk and you can listen and condole." (Presses electric bell.) "Baigent! Show Sir Eustace where the hat-and-coat place is and the bath-room; make him feel thoroughly at home; then hurry up to the excellent Mrs. B. and say I want her to get ready the *best* lunch she can in an hour or so. Go to the Stores or wherever else she sends you to get anything ready cooked; and when it's all ready serve it to Sir Eustace on that table. You'd better give me my medicine before you go, and Mrs. B. can send in my beef-tea when Sir Eustace's lunch is ready. . . . Thanks. . . ."

(A pause.)

"Now, Yusy, draw up that rocking-chair close to my divan. I'm really supposed to be in bed. This dressing-gown conceals paijamas, and this Cashmere shawl keeps my shoulders warm—lovely thing, isn't it? The Queen sent it to me once when I was in high favour, but was overtaken by a chill at Balmoral.

"If you want to smoke, smoke; and if you're thirsty there are the materials for a whisky-and-soda in that cabinet. Give me all your attention because I'm weak and irritable. We'll

take it for granted that I am a perfect wreck ; I can see that when I shave. . . .

" Yusy, old man, I'm done for. Influenza, Choselwhit, Jacobszoon, and Arthur Broadmead himself have combined to wreck my fortunes beyond recovery. I'm long past the influenza stage of infection—it was just, I suppose, an ordinary bad attack, but it affected my heart in some way. I can't face this inquiry they're setting up over the Jacobszoon business ; yet if I plead illness they'll take it as an admission of guilt. . . . I'm only infectious now as a political and social delinquent, and if you've much regard for your own welfare you oughtn't to mix yourself up with my affairs. . . . What's that saying ? ' Never catch a falling knife or save a falling friend ! ' . . .

" I'd snap my fingers at 'em over the Jacobszoon business if it weren't for something else. . . .

" I've been like a man possessed of devils these last three —four—years. I've been madly in love with a woman, and I've ruined her reputation . . . privately if not publicly. The husband found out, and for her sake and the children he patched it up so that there's going to be no divorce court business. But the Queen knows and Lord W. knows, and they'll certainly make this Jacobszoon affair the excuse pour me destituer. . . . And I hoped over that—I mean over a much bigger scheme which Jacobszoon has utterly bitched—to have made such a coup, don't you know—pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for Choselwhit, and the Court and C. R. and the British Empire generally—that they'd have overlooked the other thing and given me another chance—perhaps some big Governorship where my ambitions could have had full play. . . .

" But it isn't only C. R.'s apple-cart that Jacobszoon has upset. He's smashed my triumphal car completely. If he'd only waited till the psychological moment, till we gave him the word, we'd have had all the right on our side. But it's impossible to work with a man like C. R. and his weird Afrikanders. He's never content with one good string to his bow, but must needs have several and all in use at the same time. The result, of course, is that he misses the mark. He got up his own agencies to work the press, his own plots and intrigues, and would insist on leaving much too free a hand to Jacobszoon. . . ."

(At this juncture it strikes Eustace that Broadmead seems a little faint. He tenders medicine, smelling bottle—suggests

a postponement of the rest of the story till after lunch. Then relates his own recent experiences, the closing scenes of the Anti-Slave Trade campaign, his own illness, his journey to the coast, and home through Egypt—Broadmead grows interested and for a few minutes forgets his own sorrow.)

"What a three years! What splendid service, my dear chap. They ought to have given you more than a K to your C. M. G. . . . I always believed in you, Yusy. And to think I used to preach to you and advise you not to play the fool, and now it's *I* that am the failure! What ripping times we had in those days, didn't we? You and I between us—really—got 'em the Niger. If they'd left it to us we'd have had all Nigeria from Lake Chad to Timbuktu and Jenné, wouldn't we? The French at that time weren't ready, didn't care enough, or we could have squared 'em elsewhere. . . . Yes, and we'd have done the 'Cape to Cairo,' too, and without the help of any blasted company-maker—'The Cape to Cairo and Cairo to Old Calabar'—Do you remember how we enthused Edwin Arnold with that and he wrote an article on it in the D. T.? Even old W. looked benign when we put the phrase before him, that time at Chapelmead. I remember, rather daringly you brought it into your patter in those charades, and old Wiltshire 'ne broncha pas' . . . Well, *that* dream's all over. . . . Here's Baigent with the lunch."

They lunched—or rather Eustace did, while Broadmead consumed some invalid food with no appearance of pleasure. Baigent served Turkish coffee, administered more medicine to his master, brought a hot-water bottle for his feet and an extra rug, put cigarettes and matches ready to Eustace's hand, and withdrew with that subtle accent of finality by which the really well-trained servants of those old times conveyed to their masters that they were now secure against further interruption if they were pleased to resume their confidential conversation.

"Well, where was I? Oh, about the Raid. I'll give you the whole secret history of that affair some day. The one thing I can't tell you more about is that poor woman whose life I've spoilt by my folly and recklessness. If it had been an ordinary *bonne fortune*—I mean if she'd made one step to meet me. . . . But she *did* so want to keep straight. . . . Even now I wonder that she yielded, and still more that I could have persisted. I might have guessed how it would all end. . . . Somehow I feel it's a sort of Olivia case reversed,

that *I* have stooped to folly and the only amends *I* can make is to die."

"Nonsense. You must pull yourself together, set your teeth and say to yourself you'll—you'll——"

"You'll what? You can't, when you think of it, suggest *any* remedy to my disaster. If I hadn't come this cropper —this and a good many lesser ones farther back—over my love affairs and lost the favour of the highly placed, I might have been white-washed by the Committee of Enquiry— They're sure to do so in Choselwhit's case and I don't suppose C. R. will be much the worse for it eventually. He, after all, has got millions in the bank, and I am a nobody financially. In fact if I recover from this influenza heart I shall have very little to live on. I shall have to discharge the excellent Baigent and his still more excellent spouse, give up this snug and delightful home and commence afresh—what as? A fretful journalist? A dubious adventurer in the Argentine? You surely don't think after all I've been and done they could have the face to offer me—and I to take—a Colonial Secretaryship in British Honduras or the Gold Coast? They certainly wouldn't give me a Governorship. . . .

"They're all anxious to get their knife into me now. Now that I've lost W.'s backing and Court favour I'm done for. Can't you imagine old Snoddy's joy and all the other people's at the C.O., after I was put in there over them? . . .

"Did I ever tell you who I was and how I came to the front? My father was Lord Clavecin, but before he succeeded to the title—rather unexpectedly—he had run away with a beautiful young woman—my mother—who was the wife of one of his friends. This friend of his—a brother officer—had treated her very badly. She was Dean Brinsmead's daughter. Her parents ought never to have allowed her to marry Lord Alfred. But he was a Duke's son and they were snobs. My parents went to Italy, and I was born at Siena. . . . I believe I had an Italian wet-nurse, which is why I have too much Italy in my blood. As soon as my mother was divorced by her former scallywag of a husband—she had no children by him—my father married her; but too late to legitimize me. My younger brother, Fred, is the present Lord Clavecin. . . . He is a prig and distressingly good, so we never see much of one another. . . . Now I must have those little drops again . . . my forehead is quite wet. . . ."

"Hadn't I better go now and leave you to rest? It is very bad for you all this talking?"

"No, I beseech you, don't go. Stay till six. Every now and then I will close my eyes and lie back. Just think what it is to lie here and talk to oneself . . . go over all the irrecoverable past . . . ask myself why I did this and why I didn't foresee that. . . . I can't unburden myself to Baigent, though I confess of late I've come near to doing so. . . . Well: my father, I think, liked me better than his other son and did his best to push me into a career . . . sent me to Marlborough and Oxford.

"At Oxford I did great things . . . I dare say you've heard. Before I went there, by a freak—out of petulance—when I was twenty-one—I took the name of Broadmead—compromise between the family name of my father—Broadwood—and of my mother—Brinsmead. My mother! Oh, I was devoted to her . . . I thought her perfect among women, and for a long time couldn't understand her perpetual sorrow. I now realize why. Although she was a peeress, she was ostracized at home, and she lived in exile; and although Tuscany is adorable, still she was English-bred and she grew tired of her exile. All her beauty and sweetness and cleverness, her music and her painting never seemed to make up for the fact that humdrum, ugly, stupid women who hadn't been divorced turned away from her, though they were not fit to tie her shoe-strings. . . .

"I felt very much parting with her when I was sent to school in England, and after I was old enough to leave Marlborough I went back to her in Italy on the plea of working up modern languages. She died when I was twenty and I came back and prepared for Oxford. My younger brother Fred had gone when he was a small boy to live with my father's mother. . . . She helped to make him the poop that he is. I got so disgusted at his airs . . . that is why I insisted on a different surname. Resolved, don't you know, to make the name of Broadmead known all over the world. Eh? Like the Bastard in *King John*.

"I did *well* at Oxford in that three years and my father was delighted. It seemed to make the thing come right, don't you know? He had secured me a nomination for the F.O., and I passed the examination with a great show of marks. My knowledge of French, German and Italian stood me in good stead. My father had been a great friend of Lord W.'s when they were both young, and he promised my poor old dad before he died he would keep an eye on me. . . . Well then, you know the rest. They borrowed me at the

C.O. and I stayed on there, Empire building being my forte. . . .

"And now it's all petering out . . . and I'm only forty-three! Look how I straightened out that North Borneo business; how I bested the French over the Lower Niger. I almost invented T— G—! Damaraland wasn't *my* fault. I got treaties signed by the chiefs, but I was baulked there by the cussedness of the Cape Ministry and the colossal incuriousness of that noble mollusc, Lord Knowsley. I egged on little Johnston to take Kilimanjaro before the Germans got there. I invited the Cameroons people through Hewett to ask for a protectorate in 1883—Got them to write a collective letter to the G.O.M. Gladstone was awfully tickled and actually consented. I——"

(A pause. Silence.)

"But, I say, Eustace. . . . What Will o' the wisp gleams we pursue . . . and break our necks in the pursuit? . . . *Has* it been worth while, this Empire building? I mean, from the natives' point of view? Or have we enthusiasts only been working for the enrichment of Leopold, or Tudell, or Rhodes, and Choselwhit's friends?"

"Worth while!" replied Eustace . . . "I wish we could transport ourselves ten years, twenty years hence and be given a sight of the countries we've brought under the British flag . . . I wager you'd say *then* your life's work hadn't been thrown away! . . . Shall I pour out tea for myself?"

"Please, *please* do."

"This milky stuff in the big cup all frothed up is for you, I suppose? It looks delicious."

"Does it? I'd far sooner have a cup of China tea and two sections of tea-cake, dropping fatness as the Psalmist would say. However, pass it over and I'll sup it up while you talk."

"Well," continued Eustace, "I still have a robust faith, in spite of many a sickener. I try to retain some sense of proportion. Remember the Africa described by Mungo Park —we won't go farther back than a hundred years ago—by Lander, Bowdich, Livingstone, Burton, Stanley and a hundred others; and remember, also, *I* have seen the tail end of this Africa in the 'seventies and 'eighties: the *incessant* fighting between village and village; the ravaging small-pox epidemics and half-forgotten plagues, the famines every ten years or so . . . Why, in dry seasons I've seen living skeletons of natives following the lions about, trying to snatch bones and offal from their kills when the lions were moving away

to drink and before the jackals rushed in . . . and the lions despising their leanness too much to make a meal of them ! . . .

" And then the continuous slave raiding, either to obtain men and women to eat or to use them as drudges and porters or to make eunuchs and concubines of them. And the poison ordeals, the bloody sacrifices, the recurring turmoils and devastations, followed every now and then by the silence of death for a quarter of a century, when some region became absolutely depopulated by one or other of these causes and went back to wild beasts or sandy desert or unwholesome jungle. . . . I suppose it's been very much the same with Asia. . . . Believe me, Broadmead, though I am very critical of my fellow countrymen and don't like these chartered companies and concessionnaires as the pioneers of civilization . . . these expedients that Wiltshire adopts when he has a curmudgeon at the Treasury . . . believe me, they, at their worst, are many times better than what went before. I mean, the anarchy of ' native ' rule or the unchecked dominion of Nature. . . ."

" My dear chap : this makes you quite eloquent. . . . But I know you wouldn't gammon me. I *want* to believe you. I *want* to think, now I am going out of it all, that I haven't writ my name in water. . . . Aïe, Aïe . . . how tired I am ! . . . No, DON'T go. Stay here till the doctor comes—and then promise me . . . you'll look in . . . every morning . . . till . . . till I go out . . . in a barouche for a drive . . . round the Park . . . or in a hearse, bound for Brompton . . . Need it be Brompton ? I've always had a *horror* of those outer London cemeteries. I think Fred would relent and let me be buried where my father lies . . . he can't change the fact that I'm his full brother, though our blasted laws make me a *filius nullius*. Or . . . no. . . . Couldn't it be Siena, where my mother is buried ? Try and manage that. . . . I suppose I ought to make some sort of a will. We'll talk about it to-morrow."

" We certainly *won't*. If you mention such possibilities again I won't come any more. Or . . . I'll hunt up Bella—is she still living ? and come here and be rowdy—— ! "

Silence for a time. Eustace reads and pretends to smoke, a pretence he has kept up nearly all the time in case it should be bad for the patient's lungs. . . . Baigent announces : " Doctor Sawyer." Eustace presses Broadmead's hand and withdraws. But does not leave the house . . . explains to Baigent, out of earshot, that he waits to question the doctor. Baigent at this evidence of interest in his master almost loses

his perfect manner—babbles—calls Broadmead " Mr. Arthur " —says he and his wife are reglar *'eart*-broken at his condition of weakness, and mystified why he has lain so long ill and no one been to see him—" or at any rate no one as I could show in." Lady Feenix had sent to inquire, but his master had scrawled some message—" gen'lly somethin' to make yer laugh " on a piece of paper and " answered 'er that way." " When 'is 'eart got so bad " the doctor had sent for a nurse, a night nurse. " She does the sitting up with 'im at night but 'e won't 'ave any body but me or Mrs. Baigent about 'im in the day-time. Never see 'im like this before . . ." and Baigent is obviously not far off tears when the doctor joins them in the little entrance hall.

Doctor assumes that Sir Eustace is some one nearand dear to his patient. Expresses surprise that Mr. Broadmead has been so long dangerously ill and no relative has come to his bedside. Yet perhaps after all it was better so. It is touch-and-go with him. Not sure whether his heart isn't a little the worse for to-day's talking. . . . Eustace apologizes, but says Broadmead seemed so upset whenever he proposed going or insisted on silence, that he thought it better. . . . " P'raps you're right," rejoins Doctor, " never can tell in these cases. My patient is one of our most distinguished men, but he has been living too hard . . . burning the candle at both ends. . . . Then he seems well-nigh heart-broken about something . . . don't presume to question you about his private affairs . . . but couldn't you or some one put a little heart *into* him ? Understand he's bothered about office matters. Well . . . surely. . . . However, I feel confident from what he says he's found the right man in you. . . . If he sees any other visitor, it must be only for a few minutes and about nothing exciting. . . . *You* can stop with him as long as you like. Only, discourage talking, or *you* talk and make him listen. If he goes to sleep, you'll be doing him all the good in the world. . . ." To Baigent : " Here's another prescription. Get it made up at once, and tell the nurse. . . . Ah, here she is. . . ." Doctor talks to her on pavement while Eustace slips out ; and it being still only a quarter past six he speeds in a hansom to Brook Street and manages to catch Suzanne just before she goes to dress so that she may be told the facts about Broadmead's condition.

A few days afterwards, Broadmead seeming to have rallied somewhat, Eustace engineers a visit from Suzanne—only too

anxious to help any one in trouble, and most of all a fellow Sun-child; and Suzanne, wise in her generation, for you never know—Arthur *may* recover, and people *might* say—Suzanne brings with her as chaperon her brother Paul, with the grave kind face. Not that Lord Feenix disapproves of her going. He is not absolutely without heart; but she knows Feenix would be a source of *gêne* at this mock-merry interview. Arthur is propped up on the divan to which Baigent and the nurse carry him every morning . . . has on his purple dressing-gown, his silk socks and pumps, his Cashmere shawl and other smartnesses, and they talk about old times—ever so merrily. Bella . . . William . . . Chapelmead . . . Aloysius Brinsley and his tutor. . . . Cooey, the ever good-natured, now alas! dead. And the person who has said "dead" chokes a little and looks at the orange trees in their tubs which are being wheeled out by Baigent to stand in a patch of sunshine. . . . And Arthur never minds what he says in front of Baigent because Baigent never believes half what he says ("'E's always a pokin' 'is fun, bless you").

So Arthur declares he was once madly in love with Suzanne, and does she remember their attempt at elopement which only failed to come off because half way to the station he found he'd forgotten the tea-basket, and she wouldn't go without it, and when they got back to the house three new hats had come down from London and that fixed her. . . . And then similar nonsense but a little more real about silly Mrs. Bellamy. "Well: *that* ended up all right," says Arthur, with a sigh which shows the underlying thought of the worst cause of his heart-break. By tacit consent their tongues make no mention of Lucilla, but Broadmead asks eagerly after Rupert . . . says he hears he's a ripping little chap—is going to add that he hopes to see him soon . . . but isn't brave enough.

Then Suzanne, judging the visit long enough, rises and says dear old Arthur—just a quaver over the name—dear old Arthur must get well soon and she will have a *real* elopement this time. She'll come in Mary March's new "Motor carriage" with Yusy as chaperon and carry him off to Deerhurst and he shall return and floor that rotten old Committee. She bends over the austerely beautiful face of the man she once flirted with. . . . Paul has already turned towards the Library—and kisses him on the forehead, the sacramental kiss of farewell. One tear splashes on his smiling lips, another falls on the thin, thin hand that presses his final leave-taking . . . and she goes out wordless to her carriage.

And now the world of Mayfair and Fleet Street begins to realize that Arthur Broadmead is very ill, may not indeed recover. Even the Court—perhaps not uninfluenced by Suzanne—puts on one side those horrid stories and causes it to be known that It has sent to inquire. Lady Wiltshire, on behalf of herself and Lord Wiltshire, calls to inquire. Many old loves awaken, many pardons are tacitly uttered ; cards are left, flowers are left, hot-house fruit is left. Baigent is badgered and describes the whole of this solicitude as a dam' nuisance ; yet the edge of his sorrow, his deep, deep sorrow —for great in those past days was the love that grew up between a good master or mistress and a grateful servitor—is turned by the thought that after all it seems as they *will* miss Mr. Arthur.

Then begin those inevitable warnings of approaching public bereavement in the daily papers. The *Westminster* announces that Mr. Arthur Broadmead, C.B., the gifted Assistant Under Secretary at the Colonial Office, has passed a comfortable night ; the *Daily Telegraph* understands that he has rallied ; the *Standard* says he is making excellent progress . . . and *The Times* of the next day in its second edition announces with the deepest regret that his death took place in his sleep " just as we were going to press," and " a memoir will appear in our next issue."

It does ; and passes cleverly over the opening phases of the dead man's career. He was the " eldest son of Captain the Honble. Arthur Broadwood, 11th Hussars " (not mentioning the fact that the Honble. Captain afterwards became Lord Clavecin). " At the age of twenty-one, on coming into some property, the subject of this Memoir assumed the name of Broadmead, which he was to render so illustrious in the service of the Empire."

Well. Arthur would have laughed over this, but he would also have been pleased. The *Thunderer* can be kindly in a ponderous way. Under all the circumstances, Eustace felt his friend was right when he realized that death at forty-three was the best issue from this world which is so cruel to the found-out and the fallen ; so pitiful to those who promptly pay the forfeit.

* * * * *

Eustace found that Broadmead had after all managed to write a will on a sheet of note-paper and get it witnessed by the doctor and the nurse. He bequeathed to Eustace the little money he had—he lived rather from hand to mouth

though he left no debts that his estate did not cover. But he asked Eustace to deal faithfully with the Baigents and take them into his own service. "They were the best thing he could leave him," and he proved to be right. A gift to the nurse, a few legacies to old friends or to attendants at the Colonial Office; a few heirlooms to go to his brother; and all his furniture, books, papers and any remainder of the lease of No. 1 Ebury Street to go to Eustace.

Eustace accepted all these charges.

The death of Broadmead affected him profoundly and in many ways. With it came to be associated a growing dislike of Choselwhit, the *sournois* Minister; a greater aloofness of Lord Wiltshire who was growing anxious about many things, not least the health of his consort and whether she would stand the strain of the Diamond Jubilee fiss-fass-fuss already looming very near.

The bicycle, the new Safety bicycle—learnable in a week by a resolute person—came to Eustace as some alleviation. He made his permanent home of course at Broadmead's house, No. 1 Ebury Street; but his second home was at Deerhurst, and his third at Goring, and the old Gay-Dombey couple loved to have him at Poynings and talk over the early history of the House of Dombey. By means of the bicycle he wheeled over much of southern and western England, sometimes in company with Suzanne and her children or with Paul and Rupert; sometimes alone.

In the autumn of 1896, he was aware from office gossip and from things that came to Suzanne's ears that Lord W. had desired he should be sent out to right the affairs that had gone wrong in South Africa; but that Choselwhit, with or without the backing of C. R. and Sir James Tudell, had refused; and the appointment lying technically with the dominant Chocho, Lord W. had not insisted.

One day he was sent for by the Private Secretary and assured of Lord W.'s serious concern about his health and the need for him to have a thorough change from the more malarial parts of Africa. Would he like to go to Norway? . . . Eustace said "no" very decidedly. . . . Well: let him not be too decided, Norway might soon become a diplomatic post? No? Then how about the Consulate General at Tripoli in Barbary? This, though poorly paid, tempted Eustace; it would be lonely, possess great historical, ethnological, and geographical interest; and might fill up the time between 1897 and his pensionable age of retirement. He was a little

in the mood of Suzanne when she had seen the announcement of Broadmead's death in a morning paper, which also contained a servile testimonial from Choselwhit's native town to the great statesman who had unmasked the schemes of the Boer republics for the undoing of the British Empire. She had turned to Eustace and said—her eyes flashing with held-up tears : " Damn your Empire." Very illogically, of course.

CHAPTER XX

TRIPOLI IN BARBARY

H.B.M.'s Consulate-General,
Tripoli in Barbary,
April, 1897.

DEAR COUSIN SUZANNE,—

I've been established here nearly two months and too busy to write to you! . . .

I am anything but disappointed with Tripoli. From the point of view of position and power it is a come down after being a despot in Central Africa at £1,200 a year. But the climate is good, the peace and quiet are most welcome, and the residence—an enclosed Moorish palace between high walls, with a secret garden—most delightful. For me, especially, just a little disenchanted with Imperialism and tired of wars and conquests, it is ideal. I shall be able here to work assiduously at my accumulations of notes and studies and finish several big books on Africa which I have long had on hand: Comparative Grammars of languages; the Regional Botany of West Africa; and the Races of the Sudan. . . . I have under me a Maltese Vice-Consul who applies himself specially to the affairs of the thirty or forty thousand Maltese subjects of Her Majesty in this Turkish Pashalik; and a Legal Vice-Consul who assists me in the Consular Court. This last is an English barrister with a very nice little wife. He is a distant relation of that Captain Westlock with whom you once wanted to run away—the husband of Lady Enid and now Sir Andrew Westlock, Governor of . . . ? Tasmania.

Mrs. Westlock does hostess for me at my Moorish palace whenever I have to receive the few ladies there are here. These consist of the wives of the other Consuls-General and of the more important Maltese merchants; and in addition a curious class of Levantine lady (whose husbands are Levantine Christians that have drifted into Turkish employ, or are engineers, gas and water-works people). These ladies are of mixed Genoese, Spanish, Neapolitan, Jewish, Marseillaise and Algerian origin, use French as their exterior language

and Italian at home. They are known to one another as "Mâme" (short for Madame) So-and-so, consequently Mrs. Westlock and I call them generically "the Mâmes." They have all been exceedingly good-looking when young—brunettes of rich colouring and dazzling complexions. They are comely but bulky in middle age; and painted hags after fifty-five. Apparently in the vanished days of the immense British prestige which followed Waterloo the favour of every British Consul in Turkish or Moorish dominions was well worth a sacrifice, even of honour. These ladies, then, supported the interests of their Levantine husbands by placing themselves entirely at the disposal of the Consul; and no one thought any the worse of them for doing so.

In Tripoli they have become gradually aware that times and morals are changed. There are, for instance, in the little European Colony here two ladies: Mâme Garibaldi and Mâme Fedriani who presented themselves *comme de droit* at my first reception. Mâme Garibaldi, who is likest to a whale, told me she had been the *chère amie* of the last Consul-General but three; Mâme Fedriani, who though bulky keeps some indications of a waist, as we walked round my enclosed garden of palms and olives, said she was once the intimate friend of one of my more recent predecessors, and that, in my turn, she could deny me nothing, "ayant le coté *très* faible envers les Anglais . . . bien que je ne sois plus jeune . . . comme ça se voit."

I thanked her for the kindly offer of her friendship, "corps et âme," but suggested that I also was verging on old age, *et me contenterais d'une amitié de philosophe.*

But all things being as they are, I am afraid I cannot remain long at Tripoli with only the protection of the Legal Vice-Consul's wife; I must send home for an elderly cousin in Wales to keep the Mâmes at bay.

Johnston is coming to be Consul-General next door, in Tunis. But as he will not be out till the autumn I have let him meantime No. 1, Ebury Street. He and his wife will take on the Baigents. For reasons of sentiment and others more practical I don't want to lose that excellent couple, but at present they are rather a white elephant and No. 1, Ebury Street rather a millstone about my neck. I don't think the B.'s would fit into a Levantine household, and I shudder at letting No. 1 to any but the most careful tenant and one that is connected with either F.O. or C.O., because of Broadmead's books. I have a sort of feeling that I am shunted into a siding and may soon be allowed to retire on a pension. Then

of course the Baigents and No. 1 will be invaluable as the nucleus of a well-ordered home.

After the J.'s go the place is entirely at your disposal. But if you could find me a tenant for it whilst I am away it would help matters. . . .

52, Brook Street,
July 7, 1897.

DEAR EUSTACE,—

The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations are over. You will have seen by the papers that John is now Earl Feenix and Viscount Tewkesbury. At least those are the titles he proposes to adopt for his two steps in the peerage. And of course Victor will take the latter as a courtesy title. I have already found the blotting pads in the smoking-room scrawled over with "Tewkesbury"—"Viscount Tewkesbury requests, etc."—in several forms of that ten-year-old-boyish-handwriting characteristic of young guardsmen and very athletic persons generally.

Don't ask me to describe the Jubilee from start to finish! It is in all the papers and I yawn over it already. The Queen went through it all splendidly and was most gracious to me on several occasions: notably at the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, where she made me go round the grounds with her as she was drawn very slowly along in her little carriage. It was a wonderful sight, that Garden Party. Such a concourse . . . and the net was flung very generously.

I couldn't help noting Lady Tudell standing beside Sir James. *His* loyalty was so effusive that the Queen frowned a little, and then made up for it by a special smile at the poor little eczematous face of the rapt lady, which gave *her* an ecstatic afternoon of happiness and quite a bold manner towards her spouse. Cornelia was all smirks and did a marvellous creaking curtsy. (Evidently she wears cheap corsets.) S. Edward was pompously ecclesiastic as the new Dean of Barchester. Shrimpy Portia, by the bye, is engaged to an odious Foreign Office clerk (known in his department as "the Whelp")—Albert Victor Barnet-Skettles, a godson of H.M., as you can guess; and Cornelia seemed almost to think she was marrying her daughter into the Royal Circle.

How happy this year has made some people! Ought we to grudge Cornelia her bliss? I shouldn't . . . one bit . . . if she ever went out of her way to do any one a good turn; which I am sure she never does.

Susan K.-T. was also at the Garden Party. I think she was asked in some municipal capacity. (She simply *dominates* Marylebone.) She was very sternly and plainly dressed and looked as if she had bicycled to Buckingham Palace. The Queen, who notices everything, asked me if she was one of my rational-dress-and-women's-rights friends. I said she was, but when I also told H.M. how hard she worked among the poor, H.M. said, "*Then*, my dear, she may dress as she pleases."

Of course the Naval Review was the spectacle of its week. As mother is not very strong nowadays—she is over seventy—I helped father entertain. The Dombey Line placed two of its best steamers at the disposal of the Govt. for the Colonial and American guests, both 13,000 ton liners, the *Cornflower* and the *Primula*. Mother came, but sat down as much as possible; looking, however, so happy and so reminiscent that I had once or twice to stop and give her a kiss when the guests were well occupied with their binoculars following the Queen's progress down the line. Mother said at intervals: "If *only* Mama could have lived to see this!" I thought for *once* she might have said "Papa," for surely this was the apotheosis of "Dombey and Son." *My* papa, who pulled the House together again, was radiant, showing his Colonial and American friends these two superb ships. And Paul was such a satisfactory and handsome "Son"; while Rupert (fourteen, and up from Marlborough) was the further promise of a future for the Firm. Paul was in Naval Reserve uniform and in command of the *Primula*, with Diana as hostess—most appropriate for the Bostonians on board. I wore a dress of cornflower blue and looked *lovely*, despite my advanced age (44).

I will end on that top-note, for I've lots to do. I have looked in at No. 1 ever and again, and the Johnstons are careful tenants. . . .

SUZANNE.

Postscript. Do you remember some years ago in *Punch* a Bishop after listening to some tale of woe saying: "Ah, but my dear sir, you are at least spared *this* anxiety; *how* to place your investments"? I feel it is a little like our present difficulty about the new title. It is at least a consolation for not having a peerage conferred on you that you haven't to search through books of reference to find out whether your chosen fief hasn't been bagged by somebody else. It is like trying to find an original title for a novel.

Both Feenix and Victor were so at one about Tewkesbury. It was altogether distinguished and carried you back to the Wars of the Roses. And then after trying it on blotting pads a friend told us some dormant beast had it as his courtesy title. We knew, of course, that in the same way, Molyneux and Deerhurst—"damn it all," as Victor would say—were already registered. There was nothing for it, as Victor had had a lot of things marked with a T, but to adopt *Tredington*, as part of our estate lies in that village (you may remember this as it was where you had that bad spill when you began bicycling). Both Feenix and Victor are cross because it is undistinguished, and Victor thinks his brother officers and women friends can make some funny nickname out of it. However, "Viscount Tredington" it is to be.

* * * * *

Tripoli in Barbary,
November 3, 1897.

DEAR DOMBEY,—

I tried to stick to Tripoli all through the summer so as to accumulate leave for a better holiday at home next year; but August fairly beat me! Temp. in shade 115° Fahr.; even, when the Qibli or desert wind blew from the south, rising to 120°. Such temperatures are never heard of in Tropical Africa. So I got a fortnight's respite by going on Consular business to Malta and Rome. From Rome I went north to Siena to see if Arthur Broadmead's tomb was finished and placed where he wanted it to be. The British Vice-Consul at Siena has been most helpful and the Italian authorities everything that was kind and sympathetic. . . .

I am looking forward in a few days to a trip to Fezzan, and as far as the Turks will let me go into the Sahara. In my leisure I am making a study of the Tibu language and the Berber dialect of western Tripoli. The Hausa I retained from Nigerian days is most useful to me here in getting into touch with caravan people and finding out all about the slave trade across the Desert which the Turks still carry on.

But the main object of this letter is to tell you I am forwarding a large collection of Fezzan and Tibesti arms, implements, ornaments, leather work, etc. for your Trumpington Museum. Here is a duplicate list. . . .

Yours sincerely,
EUSTACE MORVEN.

44, Portland Place, W.,
December 5, 1897.

DEAR MORVEN,—

The packing cases full of your Sahara things arrived at the Trumpington Museum three days ago. It was thoughtful of you (Diana remarked) to have addressed them there, as if they had come to Portland Place they would have been embarrassing by their size and shape and we might have had to "break bulk" in order to convey them safely down to Cambridge. At the museum they are thoroughly used to unpacking. I ran down there yesterday with Diana and we just caught glimpses of wonderful things. The leather work is superb.

I am immersed in African affairs just now. It looks very much as though trouble were brewing in South Africa, and the Govt. have been sounding us as to transport in case a small army had to be sent there. But besides that, the great Tudell is wanting us to run a line to a port—a newly found port—on the Angola coast. His Ubunyanza Company, of which Feenix is Chairman, is thinking of a second or a third string to its bow; of direct railway communication with Angola as an alternative to the Cape route, threatened with constant interruption owing to the restlessness of the Rhodesian natives and the ominous arming of the Boers, and the Congo route which is wearisomely long and with its river communications frequently interrupted by rapids. By the bye, ominous stories are circulating as to atrocities in Congoland and native risings. And I am not desirous of identifying our Firm too much with Tudell's operations for that and other reasons.

Suzanne's husband, of course, is Chairman, but seems to content himself with drawing a huge salary and leaving not merely Tudell but personalities much duskier to run the details of the prospecting and administrative work out in Africa. Of course they are supposed to be answerable to a supreme government of sorts; but within the Congo basin it is only that of Leopold and farther south of the B.S.A. Co., which is at present too much *aux prises* with the native populations to exercise much control over the whites on its borderlands. What is your advice in the matter? . . . Yours, etc.,

PAUL DOMBEY.

* * * * *

During 1898, Sir Eustace Morven gave himself up to the close study of the Tripolitaine, and subsequently published

more than one important treatise on this part of North Africa. He also assisted in relieving the "Fashoda" tension between Britain and France by the action he took with the Turkish authorities to stop the Tuaregs raiding into Southern Tunis. This was becoming a source of dangerous exasperation to the French, who were trying to introduce law and order and commercial prosperity into their Tunisian protectorate. His month's leave in England was spent chiefly with his Dombey riends and adopted relations, ranging from Sir Walter's house at Poynings (near Brighton) to the Feenixes in Gloucestershire.

* * * * *

Foreign Office,
April 25, 1899.

DEAR MORVEN,—

We have heard comparatively little of you since you went to recuperate in the desert atmosphere of Tripoli two years ago; beyond, that is, your admirable Consular Reports and your special Report on the Sponge Divers industry on the Tripolitan coast. But I have not failed to note how busy you have been with your pen on subjects not necessarily official: Roman ruins, the Fauna of the Sahara, and what not else.

Now, are you ready once more to plunge into Tropical Africa, where you are *facile princeps?* If so (and of course you must ask yourself how your health would stand it) Lord Wiltshire would be very glad to appoint you a sort of Special Commissioner and Consul-General to proceed to Southern Congoland with very wide powers: administrative—as they were a few years ago, when you went there for like purposes and dealt more especially with that part of the Congo Basin which comes within the British sphere—and Consular, where they affected that vague and vast region nominally under King Leopold, where lie the greater part of the Ubunyanza Company's Concessions.

The daily papers—which I presume you see in Tripoli—will have conveyed to you the uneasiness which is felt here as to the proceedings of the white men of several nationalities in Southern Congoland. The Anti-Slavery Society makes very serious statements also about the Portuguese methods of recruiting in the Lunda countries and the inner parts of Angola. We are by no means anxious to believe all we are told. The Ubunyanza Company is directed by distinguished men of high character, and as to Portugal she is mistress in

her own house and we are loath to interfere with her methods of administration.

* * * * *

We remember here in the office your acquaintance with the Portuguese language and your facility for getting on with that people. If you accepted the offer I am putting before you informally, your salary would be at the rate of . . .

* * * * *

In the event of your acceptance you are authorized to make the best arrangement for a consular officer to act in your absence, and to proceed to London at once.

Yours sincerely,
MULBERRY HAWK.

* * * * *

Sir Eustace Morven left England for Central Africa in the autumn of 1899 to assume these new duties in Southern Congo-land. His departure coincided with the opening of the South African War. One of the Dombey steamers went out of its way to land him at Benguela (in Southern Angola), whence he proceeded with the Honble. Walter Molyneux as his private secretary to his projected headquarters in Ubunyanza.

CHAPTER XXI

UBUNYANZA, 1900–1902

Poynings, near Brighton,
April 25, 1900.

DEAR EUSTACE,—

One among the several advantages of your having taken my Walter with you is that he is able every now and then to write about your doings when you are too busy to do so. Thus I not only have had an account of the voyage out and the arrival at Loanda, but of the incidents of the journey across the southern part of the Congo basin to your headquarters on the Lualaba. Thank you also for your own brief but satisfactory note about Walter. I am so glad he pleases you. There is no doubt from his letters that he has a very high opinion of *you*.

Well now, I suppose where you are you don't at present get the Reuters telegrams. If you do, Walter may have had as a sudden shock—though Youth is very callous—the news of his grandfather's death. My dear father died rather suddenly from bronchitis a fortnight ago.

He had felt the events of this South African War dreadfully. He never believed it possible that the Boer republics could put up such a resistance or that British generals could make such blunders as B— has done before Ladysmith. Our defeats in Natal last autumn-winter added years to his look of age. In October, '99 he looked more like 62 than 82. In March this year he had become a very old man. His perpetual anxiety was that there would be an attempt at European intervention, and that with Lord Roberts away in South Africa we should be quite unprepared to meet it. You will remember how even before the War he was getting quite crazed about Germany? (By the bye, Fanny tells me that there has been a revival of prophecy in the Second Adventist Churches and that the Kaiser is now definitely singled out as the coming Antichrist. . . . I suppose you saw or heard before you were buried in Central Africa—oh, what a horrid ominous word—I scratch it out—I mean absorbed into Cen-

tral Africa—that he had done a deal with Choselwhit and managed to secure Samoa and some other Colonial pickings ?)

But about poor father. He got a touch of influenza at the beginning of April, and as mother was also ill I came down here with Carinthia to help, and found father dying of bronchitis and no longer conscious. Mother is likely to die too. I doubt if she will long survive him. They were always like two turtle doves—the turtle doves of poetry and not of fact. Real turtle doves are extremely cruel—in captivity, at any rate—and peck one another to death over some quarrel at the seed-box.

We more or less know the conditions of father's will. Most of my share of his estate came to me in my dowry or was added when my children were born. My sisters and my two younger brothers will have enough to bring them in about £900 a year each. The rest of his estate goes to Paul, with a life interest for mother. He has left a number of legacies for old friends and servants, including £3,000 to young Rupert Smith-Dombey—"on his coming of age"—£1,000 to *you* ("in remembrance of his friendship with your father"); and £500 each to his grandchildren. So you can tell Walter he will soon have placed to his account a clear Five Hundred pounds, free of legacy duty.

Father did not buy Poynings; only rented it from its owners. I think it is almost certain my mother will give it up and either go to live at Goring with Diana and Paul, or take a flat at Hove, if she can induce Fanny to live with her.

But Fanny is much too flighty and selfish to settle down in Hove or even in Brighton. She must have some active religious wrangle on hand, and Brighton takes its religions too superficially to quarrel about them. . . . After Father Blougram's death four years ago her excessive Anglicanism underwent a change; she even dallied for a while with the Adventists, being much attracted by their Byzantine services. Then suddenly she went off at a tangent to the Theosophists and, so to speak, burnt her idols. Now she is a Christian Scientist, and I am sure would be a very bad companion to my dear little frail mother, as she would be quite capable of seeing her die, rather than call in a doctor of profane medicine. . . .

To add to my preoccupations there is, of course, the constant anxiety about Victor. He went out at the very beginning of the War and was slightly wounded at Elandslaagte and very nearly made prisoner. But he behaved—they say—with superb courage and coolness and is now on Lord Roberts's

staff. He went through the siege of Ladysmith, which at last is over. We are less anxious than we were about the war, though Mafeking is not yet relieved. . . .

Well then, there was Edith. I really never thought when she married Willowby she would be a mother like any one else, because of her incessant sports. However, only a fortnight before father was taken ill, I was summoned to her husband's hunting box in Ireland, and there was poor Edie at the point of death, having given birth prematurely to a seven-months' child! Willowby was in a frantic state of mind, partly for joy at having a son and heir, and partly with fright that the mother and child would both die. But Edith's extraordinary toughness triumphed and she was fortunately out of danger just before I got the news of father being so ill. Considering each time I crossed the Irish Channel it was through a blizzard, and that you couldn't even get a hot-water bottle on those appalling Irish railways (the wonderful improvements Tudell says he instituted did not last long), you can imagine what I look like by now—grey hairs coming amid the gold and all that sort of thing and blue bags under my eyes. I should not mind this so much if Edith had had a more satisfactory child and I felt *properly* a grandmother. But I don't, because when I last saw the baby it was so *piteously* small and unfinished; it made me think of the minute offspring found by young ladies in fairy tales in the cups of water-lilies or under a burdock leaf. Edith, however, manifests real interest in it, just as she used to do in rearing turkey poults—keeps it in a sort of incubator and wrapped in cotton wool. . . . Ugh! However, *pourvu que ça dure!* I mustn't be gruesome. But one way and another I am "rattled," as they are now saying about our dear old generals with Crimean whiskers whom we are sending out to South Africa; *faute de mieux:* only to have them back on our hands a few months afterwards. . . .

You need only read *bits* of this letter to Walter!

52, Brook Street, W.,
February 4, 1901.

. . . We are back again in London after going through all the ceremonies connected with the funeral of our dear Queen. You are not so far nowadays from the overland telegraph set up by Cecil Rhodes as not to have heard the news of her death soon after it happened. . . . I feel it *very, very* much. She was always extraordinarily kind to me, and I always thought

her a most remarkable woman, the very embodiment of common sense and shrewdness mixed with real goodness of heart. I know some people will be found to sneer at her because she hadn't their literary tastes ; but then as likely as not their literary taste will be the distaste of a generation hence. However. . . . This event dwarfs all other news. *How* shall we get along without her ?

I am afraid you will find this letter rather boresome, and somehow for the last two years I seem to have had only deaths and bereavements to write about. Mercifully Victor is still safe and sound. Will this tiresome war—this " sort of a war " as Lord Halsbury calls it—*never* come to an end ? My mother is obviously dying ; just quietly fading away.[1] She has taken no interest in life since father went out of it, nearly a year ago. She is at present at Goring, with Diana. The Hove flat was *not* a success, and Fannie behaved very badly. Like most very religious people she is a tinkling cymbal. Lucrece also would not give up her painting and her studio life to spend more than a week-end with mother ; and then she only upset her by her *extraordinary* clothes, her constant smoking and her talk about young men. Lucrece is now forty-four—I am surprised she has not married, though I am quite sure I shouldn't have liked my brother-in-law ! But many a needy artist must have known that she had means enough to support a husband who could then paint what Impressionist rubbish he liked. Yet although men have always been a subject of interest to her, *she* has never attracted *them*. And yet she is not bad-looking, though like Fanny she is rather pasty in complexion. The unmarried men cannot away with her, so she pursues the married and anchored with her ardent friendships ; and has an ever-growing delusion that *all* men are strangely drawn to her by some undefined fascination of manner that she possesses. Even the sight of the obviously fleeing does not disturb her equanimity. It only shows they are exercising all their will power to escape the siren ! To enhance this fascination she dons the most outré costumes and is the laughing-stock of Chelsea —except that Chelsea is now habituated to her. But really when she appeared in such garments and such hats at Brighton she was positively mobbed. This did awake a flickering gleam of amusement in mother and we concerted a plan of telling Lucrece the truth, ever so guardedly—for she is one

[1] Lady Gay-Dombey died (almost on the anniversary of her husband's death), April 24, 1901.—H. H. J.

to whom you must sugar the pill. So one day at lunch I brought the conversation round to dress and said, "By the bye, Lukey, why don't you dress more often in *black?* . . . It suits you *so* well!"

"*I can't.*"

"Why?"

"*Men speak to me more!*"

Fanny, as a Christian Scientist, now dresses alternatively in the colours of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and I believe on their special festivals comes out in a rainbow costume.

Heigh-ho! What fools we all are in some direction or another. By the bye, Baigent is very restless. He says he is eating his head off at No. 1, and ought to be out with you in Africa. He declares he would make just as good a servant as any black man, and is sure if you were taken better care of you would not have fever so often. He was a little consoled by getting a letter from Walter which spoke of your coming home next year. It was kind of Walter to write to him. Not, I think, the sort of thing Wally would have done before he came under *your* influence. I am so glad the dear boy is such a success and so much your right hand man. It consoles Feenix a little for your criticisms of the Ubunyanza Co. I wanted him to give up the Chairmanship, but he says it would be a damned caddish thing to do just as the Company is getting into hot water.

Yours,

S.

Deerhurst,
August 30, 1902.

DEAR EUSTACE,—

We have had one horrid, jarring disappointment just lately, but before I go into that let me tell you some pleasant things. Paul has been given a peerage, one of the "Peace" honours —"for his services rendered in the transport of His Majesty's troops to and from South Africa, and generally for the notable part he has played in the development of the British Mercantile Marine." We are all *so* pleased because Paul can now take up work in Parliament if he wishes. If the Liberals come in he ought really to go to the Admiralty. After his rebuff at Southampton West he never cared again to stand for the House of Commons. . . . He will probably take the title of Lord Goring. . . .

The other piece of (moderately) good news is that we have

started a motor-car. We actually are able to motor down from Brook Street (or up to Brook Street) in about six hours ! . . . Now for the disagreeable news, an affair which has quite spoilt our summer.

You know Victor was again wounded in South Africa, after getting the D.S.O. and being mentioned in despatches. Well, he went into hospital near Pretoria and was nursed by a Miss Myra Perkins. She had really come out to S. Africa as an actress (" Myra Pilgrim ") in a variety troupe, just before the War. When the war started the troupe went to pieces and Myra trained as a Red Cross hospital nurse, and really became a good one. She nursed Victor not only after he was wounded but through the attack of enteric that followed. And Victor, supremely critical as we thought him, so excessively difficult to please that he found fault with every eligible *partie* we suggested to him after he came of age : Victor whose ideas of " good form " would have excluded all the early Christian saints and martyrs and most of the Greek goddesses : Victor fell in love with Sister Myra and married her as soon as he was convalescent !

The first we heard of it was a cablegram from him at Newlands, near Cape Town. " Married Miss Myra Perkins yesterday. Health restored. Leaving shortly for home. Letter follows." Well, you can imagine the effect of this bombshell ! Feenix, who has been very nervy and irritable lately, quite lost that ironclad calm that used to annoy me so when anything had upset or interested *me*. We were in London at the time and he looked up the name of Perkins in every peerage modern or extinct ; he looked for it among the Landed Gentry and the County Families. A stray Perkins was discoverable here and there, in the purlieus of the present or the past, but never the conjunction with " Myra." We then turned to that new production, *Who's Who*, but without success. Then I had an inspiration. I wrote to the Editor of the *Era* (we had once or twice met in connection with the affairs of Diana's Hostel). I asked him if, in any records of the modern Stage, there was any trace of Miss Myra Perkins. After some delay he replied " No," the nearest he could get to it was " Myra Pilgrim," who had gone out to Johannesburg in May, 1899, in Mr. Edgar Swiveller's Variety Entertainment. A further note to Bella, who lives retired from this rude world at Twickenham, elicited the information that Myra Pilgrim and Myra Perkins were one and the same ; that she was " quite respectable," her mother was a rather superior costumière connected

with the theatre and her father was a scene painter at Her Majesty's.

I tremblingly doled out this result of my inquiries to Feenix, but he scarcely acknowledged my words. He simply raged internally, though he said nothing. It was the bitterest blow that could have fallen on him, and I really felt attempts at consolation were futile. You see, he had become quite one-ideaed on the subject of the House of Feenix; he had ceased to care for politics; he planned for Victor some splendid match—an American heiress for choice—with half a million of money which should place his Earldom on a pinnacle of lasting magnificence. "Blood" was, of course, not to be despised; he wouldn't have rejected as a daughter-in-law a peer's or even a baronet's child, *provided* the dowry was large. But money there *must* be.

I tried once or twice to brighten him by saying that Victor was so frightfully particular that he could not make a *mésalliance*, that no doubt when the young couple arrived we should find that Myra was the daughter of some one who had picked up colossal diamonds or got rich over the war so recently that they weren't in any book of reference. He said nothing; simply set his teeth and sat—or walked about—for three weeks in frozen silence, looking *grey*.

Victor and Myra were in no hurry to throw themselves at our feet. They got off the steamer and stopped a week at Madeira (I dare say Victor was a bit frightened when he got near home), and from Madeira the letter was posted to us. It simply said Myra was the dearest girl in the world; that her nursing, he believed, had saved his life, and that when we saw her we should fall in love with her as he had done!

Well, my dear, in due time we saw her—at least *I* did (Feenix hasn't done so yet). I did *not* fall in love with her. She is at least twenty-seven—a year older than Victor—her complexion is visibly "improved" by a not very skilful make-up, one of her front teeth requires attention, and I should say her hair had been treated with henna. As to her voice, it is not unpleasing, but there is certainly the trace—just the trace—of a cockney accent. I am quite ready to believe that she has always been a "good" girl, and I was a little won over by the "straight" look in her grey-green eyes. She dresses well—and that is about all. To me she seemed rather a nullity. *Quite* self-possessed; not at all inclined to apologize nor yet to swagger, but just uninteresting.

Victor, however, is absolutely in love with her. Perhaps

she really deserves this devotion from one so fastidious, and it is the reward for her excellent and unwearied nursing.

Yet I can't help feeling a little hurt and cynical. If you come to devotion, I myself nursed Victor through scarlet fever which he brought back with him once from Eton, and I was quite ready to have gone out and nursed him in South Africa except that he cabled " No need. Thanks." And I *do* think he might have tried a little to look at the thing from his father's point of view. However, there you are. That is the new generation all over. The parents simply don't count.

As to *her* parents she was quite frank. Her mother (Mrs. Perkins, but *not* of Paddington Green) is the Madame Pierrette of the theatre programmes who " dresses " most of the comedies at the best theatres, and her father has " sometimes had pictures in the Royal Academy." They are comfortably off, but not, I suppose, in a position to do more than pay for her belated trousseau. However, as the fact of the marriage was there, without telling John, I ordered our electric brougham and went and called on the mother in the south of London (Denmark Hill).

Do you know, I *rather* liked her, couldn't avoid the feeling I *might* get chummy with her in course of time ? I suppose it is some element of base blood in me, because—dare I remind you, who know all our family secrets ?—my own dear father was born at Peckham ! Mrs. Perkins has been much better looking than her daughter, though she now looks very tired and overworked. She has had *ten* children, and the attempt to educate them all and put them out into the world has obliged the parents and the children themselves—like Myra—to work hard for a living. But she is a refined woman, and most interesting to talk to. However, John remains *quite* irreconcilable. He has had *one* interview with Victor—refused to shake hands with him and refused to have him at either Brook Street or Deerhurst. So, as the Dower House is let, they will have to go to an hotel. Fortunately Lord Kitchener has assured Victor that he shall have some staff appointment. And if Feenix stops or diminishes his allowance *I* must make it up somehow.

I can't help being sorry for John. It is the bitterest disappointment of his life. It has perhaps brought us nearer together. He displayed some feeling yesterday when I said, " My *dear* old John ; we won't talk about it any more just now, but I *do* understand and I *do* feel sorry for your disappoint-

ment." I have never seen him shed a tear, but his eyes did flash then with something wet and he gripped my hand. "After all," he said, "there's Walter."

As to that bold hunter of big game, *do* ask him to be careful of himself. You can tell him this story in the way you think best.

Yours,

S.

Copy of a Cablegram from Sir Eustace Morven, K.C.M.G., Bukama, Etat Indépendant du Congo, to Sir Paul Dombey, Bart., 44, Portland Place, London. Dated September 15, 1902.

Break to the Feenixes following. Walter killed by elephant, September 14. Am writing full particulars. Deepest regrets.

* * * * *

Bukama, Congo Free State,
September 20, 1902.

DEAR LORD FEENIX,—

I never had such a terrible letter to write before. I am indeed so ill at the time of writing that I have got to dictate it to one of my assistants. Five days ago I sent off a cablegram from the nearest station on the Cape-to-Cairo line worded as per enclosure.

You dear son Walter heard on the morning of the 14th that a band of elephants was ravaging the natives' plantations about five miles upstream from here. They had really been doing much damage to the native crops lately—it is just the beginning of the Spring here; and Walter had gone out occasionally with two experienced native hunters, and had been most successful. He had shot several tuskers with good ivories and their meat was a great help to the people, who are hungry just now in the gap between the harvests.

I begged him, as usual, to be careful. I could not go with him, as I had some important work to do in preparation for the mail which goes out to-day.

About four in the afternoon of the 14th natives came in to tell me that Walter and one of the native hunters had been either badly wounded or killed by an elephant. I hurried to the scene and found the report only too true, though in dear Walter's case the injuries were not so evident externally.

Since then I have been so ill as to have nearly died—and I *wanted* to die, you may believe me—I don't feel I can ever face his parents again; but I have had the dear boy's body

enclosed and preserved as well as local circumstances permitted.

What I thought was—and forgive me if I express myself clumsily—that you might not like to think of him buried so far away from home—what I thought was that we might arrange to bring—no, to *send* him home, for I shall probably never see England again—in the same way that Livingstone was, that he may rest with his ancestors at Tewkesbury.

You will quite understand that I *cannot* write to his mother. I shall make no protest if she says she desires never to hear my name or see my face again. But to you I must say, in justice to the dear lad, that yours is no common loss. He was of the very finest stuff and mettle. To me he has been simply invaluable ; so diligent in humdrum office work, so cheery a companion, so gallant in times of danger—I can't go on, even though this is a dictated letter. If you can bear to hear from me again, I will tell you much more some day.

Good-bye to both of you. I wish to God I had never come on this expedition. I wish equally you had never been associated with this Company. Cannot you withdraw on the plea of health and of your bereavement ? Even before this last catastrophe I have been—and I know Walter was—torn between two desires ; one to expose unflinchingly the cruel exploitation of the natives ; the other to spare the Company as much as possible because of your association with it. Of course your Company is only one of the offenders ; the Congo State Government and that of Angola are equally or more to blame.

EUSTACE MORVEN.

Copy of Decoded Cablegram from Foreign Office to Sir Eustace Morven, December 14, 1902.

Countess Feenix asks us forward following in cypher. Your letter September 20, received. We hold you entirely blameless. Am writing. SUZANNE.

In the months that followed Walter Molyneux's death, Eustace strove, as it were, to kill himself with overwork, with the result that his health apparently improved. He worked with a demonic energy that exasperated the Congo State officials, the " Ubu " Company's employés and the Chartered Company's representatives in North East Rhodesia ; and even elicited protests from the sleepy and civil-spoken Portuguese in the lands of Lunda and at rail-head, far away on the Angola

frontier. He navigated unnavigable streams in canoes, if he could not push a steam launch past the rapids ; he came on the primeval savages gathered for a cannibal feast and quite unconscious of themselves being the victims of inhuman atrocities inflicted by dimly-heard-of white men ; he also found out real wrongs and redressed them. He anticipated Mr. Torday in the discovery of the Bushongo civilization enclosed between forest walls and mighty rivers in the very heart of Congoland ; he first discovered the caves of the Balomotwa, which have yet to yield up their mysteries of early copper mining ; he opened up the road to missionaries ; and discovered virgin forests of Funtumia rubber, and concealed his information against the better days of Congo Reform.

They wearied alike of his denunciations of wrong-doing and enthusiastic reports on vegetable and mineral wealth, in the attenuated African Department of the F.O., which was now shifting so many of its burdens on to the sister office in Downing Street. They deplored his excess of reforming energies and sulkily sent on his bulky herbariums to the specialists at Kew.

One afternoon in April, 1903, Eustace was returning on foot from the river bank at Bukama to his bungalow on the forested hill. He had come back from a long river journey with one of his Vice-Consuls, and leaving the latter to see to all the business about canoe-men and luggage, he strode—or rather, limped, for his toes were inflamed with "jigger" burrowings—along the red path through the tall trees. He felt, as usual after each great exertion, dispirited, futureless, and very tired. He was dirty, his clothing was disgracefully shabby and torn ; he badly wanted tea, a bath, and bed ; yet realized that the tea would be cold and overdrawn, the bath would be lukewarm, dinner would be late, and the sheets of his bed probably damp, and the dingy mosquito curtain be, as always, torn and admitting of mosquitoes.

The main road from the west, from the Lunda countries, here entered the path that led to his headquarters. On this road he saw coming towards him and aware of his presence, a procession of "machila"[1] boys trudging with an empty

[1] Machila is the universal Portuguese name for a travelling hammock or cot slung on a long pole and carried thus on the shoulders of native porters. It was the only means of travel for Europeans in Central Africa who were too tired or ill to walk in the days before wheeled traffic.

machila, and in front of them a nondescript white man in clothes that looked like a misused suit of dittos. And the face and attitude—rather deprecatory—of the person in these clothes seemed oddly familiar, yet utterly incongruous with the landscape. . . . "Baigent! It's *Baigent!* Why . . . what—on—earth——?"

"Oh, sir! Oh, Sir Eustace. . . . I do 'ope you won't mind. It was all my doin'; leastways, Countess Feenix, she approved *most 'eartily*. 'Baigent,' she says—'er ladyship says, I mean—' It's a good idea. You go out and nurse 'im an' look after 'im, and bring 'im 'ome safely to all of us; and *I'll* stand by you. You can tell 'im all our news,' she says, and she's give me a letter for you. . . . No . . . I ain't got it on me: dursen't carry it in me pockets. . . . I've 'ad to swim some of the rivers . . . but as soon as I can unpack. . . .

"Oh, Sir Eustace . . . you ain't goin' to be angry and send me back! Lord Goring—'e *quite* agreed with the Countess, and sent me out in one of 'is steamers to Saint Paul dee Loanda. . . . And lor'! The journey was a *picnic* compared to what some of 'em made it out to be. I come part of the way by rail. . . . And . . . the British Consul. . . . Why the Governor of Angola 'imself sent for me and says—in English, mind yer, 'You give Sir Morven my best compliments and I 'ope 'e'll pay me a visit on 'is way 'ome.' And the Portygeese on the way, they was as kind as kind, 'cos of the Governor's letter; though I couldn't make to understand 'em always. . . . And now, Sir Eustace, I've kep' you standin' long enough. Let me get to work. . . . Sir. . . ."

Eustace told me afterwards that the only reply he could make to the man, standing expectant of reproof with a battered bowler in his hand, was to stammer, "Baigent! Baigent!"—and then turn his face against the prickly trunk of a huge, buttressed tree and cry as he had not done, even over Walter's death. Then Baigent blubbered, and—such things easily happen with the Negro—the eight machila carriers wept noisily, and the nearer among the weary, squatting porters wiped their eyes with the backs of hands and their noses with wisps of grass. After that, Eustace laughed boisterously as he had not done for many months, and Baigent snuffled and laughed less loudly; and the caravan porters laughed and asked for a "mata bicho"—a tot of rum—which—all principles and Brussels Acts notwithstanding—was served out to them from a large demijohn under Baigent's control.

An hour and a half afterwards, Baigent said, "Your bath

Sir Eustace, is ready. I 'ope you'll find it 'ot enough. I've put out a change of clothes and a cup o' tea by the bedside. And as far as I can make out from what your cook says, your dinner hour is six, and 'e says another gentleman is coming to dine with you. At present 'e can't find the napkins, but we'll manage some'ow."

And Baigent was in the orthodox English costume of a butler-valet late in the afternoon. (In a few days, the deft hands of a half-caste Portuguese tailor had arranged more suitable clothes for S. Latitude 9°.)

An astonished Vice Consul arriving at six, in clean but badly ironed white duck clothes, saw an unmoved butler—who might have descended from the skies—in black coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, come forward with a tray of cocktails or sherry and bitters, and next wave him to his place at the rickety camp table. Eustace, too tired and too happy to deny himself a whimsical mystery, offered no explanation, but talked all through the exceptionally well-served dinner (conscious of a certain dear letter in his breast pocket) with a gaiety that the Vice Consul—who had only been out six months—had never seen in him before. He had, however, the tact to withdraw to his own quarters after coffee and cigarettes and leave his Chief to the enjoyment of a home mail.

Then Baigent, assisting Sir Eustace to undress, applying ointment to the sore and injured feet, and tucking in the mended mosquito net, once the patient was in bed between tolerably clean and dry sheets, told some of the home news.

How the death of "pore young Mr. Walter had reglar knocked Earl Feenix over. It had come on top of other trouble; they was terrible upset by Lord Tredington's marriage, 'e being the eldest son, they'd 'oped for a better match. Not that he, Baigent, could see much to find fault with in Lady Tredington, though she was only an 'ospital nurse when 'e married 'er and it was a reglar love match. But 'is father 'ad a seizure when 'e got the news about Mr. Walter, and 'e won't ever be able to leave 'is bath chair again, they say. . . .

"As to Lord and Lady Tredington. . . . But the Countess 'ave told you all about that in 'er letter, no doubt. 'Er Ladyship's been and put 'em into No. 1, sir; she was sure you wouldn't mind, and she'll clear 'em out before you comes 'ome. Mrs. Baigent 'll cook for 'em, and she's got in 'er niece to 'elp and 'is Lordship's man. And the Countess says she's going to look in once a week to see they treats the Libery books carefully."

CHAPTER XXII

SIR EUSTACE STANDS FOR PARLIAMENT

SIR EUSTACE MORVEN'S Report on *Forced Labour in Ubunyanza* or the "South Congoland atrocities" created one of those fortnight-old sensations in London and the provinces; and for a sensation of this kind to dominate the Press for two continuous weeks shows that it was one at least of the second magnitude. There were many questions in the House of Commons, answered sympathetically by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and a few days later the subject was raised in the House of Lords by Lord Goring and replied to rather vaguely by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the vagueness being due to his Lordship having mixed his papers on entering the House of Lords and not being quite certain whether Ubunyanza was in South America or South Central Africa.

There were indignation meetings at Caxton Hall; at the "Horns," Kennington; and at the Kensington Assembly Rooms; also at Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast. There were leading articles and special articles in *The Times* and other London daily papers; in the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Manchester Guardian;* and there were mocking or rancorous counter articles defending the Company or the Belgians or the Portuguese in the *London Argus*, the *Whitehall Gazette*, *Society Chit-chat*, the *Skibbereen Observer* and *Catholic Sentinel.* (The last-named did not so much palliate the atrocities or doubt their existence as they scoffed at their triviality beside the daily torture of the Irish people, and believed they were got up by the Protestant missionaries to discredit the work of the Catholic propagandists.)

During the brief period that this agitation lasted there were two by-elections, and two carpet-bagger candidates, a London barrister and a Scottish solicitor, actually were elected on this issue alone, though their only knowledge of Ubunyanza was derived from the bluebook and the newspaper articles. Being once in Parliament they wisely dropped the subject and made themselves disagreeable on surer ground. . . . Till

one got a lesser Judgeship and the other was made a Recorder.

It was noted, without much unfavourable comment, that Earl Feenix had had to retire from the chairmanship owing to a serious breakdown in health, and that this very collapse was due to the shock he had sustained on learning telegraphically of the death in a hunting accident of his son. The fact that he had allowed his son to go out as the private secretary of the Special Commissioner showed that he was anxious for the fullest possible inquiry. On the other hand, much blame was cast obliquely on Sir James Tudell, of whom the newspaper-writing and reading public were getting a little tired. He had lost his seat—strange to say—at the Khaki Election of 1900. Either he had not bribed quite enough, or accident had brought a few too many honest and shrewd electors into his constituency ; but he took his rebuff very philosophically, feeling quite sure that when and if he wanted to get back into the House or couldn't pull off a peerage, he had only got to arrange the thing financially with his party's whips for a safe seat. So he was not present in the House to hear the stinging diatribes of an Hon. Member.

For more than a fortnight after the publication of the Report, people of distinction found they were unfortunately pre-engaged when Sir James Tudell asked them to dinner. (Out-of-the-way good his dinners were, not of course given at his dull Regent's Park house, with the eczematous lady as hostess and wet blanket, but at the Savoy, the Carlton or the Amphitryon Club . . . and followed by a couple of boxes at the nine o'clock comedy most in vogue, or at the indecentest dancing to be seen at the smartest of Music halls, or a rattling good display of particularly bloody boxing at the Pugilist Arena near Covent Garden.)

This boycott lasted for nearly three weeks.

Then other subjects—especially the dawning controversy on Free Trade—edged Ubunyanza off the screen. A semi-Royal Duke dined with Sir James, and a notice of the dinner appeared in a not too prominent paragraph of the best papers the next morning. Sir James, it was said, was having the most stringent inquiries made ; and while deprecating the exaggerated statements that had been flung about and which reflected unfairly on the other Governments co-operating with Great Britain in the noble task of opening up the dark places of Africa, still was not prepared to deny that there may have been *trop de zèle* on the part of those who were pressing on the export of Rubber, in order adequately to feed the large and

flourishing industries which had arisen in connection with the manufacture of motors and bicycles : industries which afforded a lucrative employment to thousands of intelligent artisans.

Eustace, accompanied by the excellent Baigent—quite a different Baigent to the butler-valet of the previous year, bronzed and almost soldierly looking—arrived in London just as the dead season of 1903 was going to begin. He paid a brief visit to an estranged F.O. to announce his return and then at their prompting went off to the country for rest and recuperation, with the private hint to keep off public meetings and all sensation-mongering as much as possible.

His great consolation lay in the healing of any breach : no, the realization that there never *had* been a breach for one moment—between himself and Suzanne over the death of Walter. Lord Feenix perhaps disliked him a little more, but he had almost ceased to count. He lived an invalid life in a wheeled chair or in his bedroom, with a male attendant ; and waited on very assiduously by an extraordinarily patient wife. But when everything had been done for her husband Suzanne still had hours of leisure to bestow on Eustace. Carinthia sat, and bicycled, and motored with him at other times. Rupert Smith-Dombey, who had just got into Cambridge as a freshman, spent a week with them at Deerhurst now and then. Eustace hired a motor from London ; Baigent soon became a practised chauffeur ; and then, with as fresh a feeling of adventure as if he were starting to cross Africa from sea to sea, Eustace would pursue in two days a deviating but delicious course through loveliest England from Tewkesbury to Goring-by-Sea in West Sussex. Here he would have long confabulations with Paul, and at last after nearly twenty years' acquaintance, find Diana really gracious, really ready to believe that he might be a good man, though he had no very hard and fast conception of the Creator.

But when October came along, it was necessary to have his future position defined. So he took up his residence at No. 1, Ebury Street, and went to the F.O. for the object of grappling with those in authority.

It was a much changed Foreign Office to that which he had known in the enthusiastic days of Imperial expansion. Lord Wiltshire was dead, and for a year or more before his death had lived retired from all the worries of statecraft, regarding a little sardonically the taking up of the sceptre of Imperialism by the Prophet of Northampton, the Right Honble. Josiah

Choselwhit. Sir Mulberry Hawk had retired at the age limit, and in some blissful country retreat was devoting all his thoughts to a *Life and Letters of Earl Branville.* Thrumball had gone to Paris ; the gifted and artistic Beauregard Lansdell had first lost his sight, and then had died from sheer heart-break at being shut out from the contemplation of beautiful things ; the surly yet not wholly unlikable Bennet Molyneux was spending his last years of service at a Legation ; and his place had been taken by that rising functionary who for some inexplicable reason—for if you look it up in a dictionary it has little meaning—had been nicknamed "the Whelp": Albert Victor Barnet-Skettles, son of a former minister to Sweden and husband of Portia Dombey.

It came about that when Eustace first saw Mr. Albert Victor Barnet-Skettles (recently made a C.B. for having devised a new cypher or secured by craft the cypher of a foreign power while acting as Minister-Resident in Montenegro [1]) he had been a little put out of temper by visits from the Congolese Chargé d'Affaires and the Secretary of the Portuguese Legation. These diplomatists had complained of the aspersions thrown on their Governments' rule in Africa by the Report of Sir Eustace Morven which His Majesty's Government had just published as a blue book. Barnet-Skettles, while not seeming to give away his chief, had been anxious to keep well with foreign diplomacy and certainly not to espouse too strongly the cause of a person whom he could not regard quite as "one of us," seeing he had been borrowed at some remote period from the Colonial Office and was one of the protégés of the extinct Lord Wiltshire. He had therefore in rather mumbled French assured these gentlemen on their separate calls that—er—they needn't take the

[1] I feel I ought to say at this juncture that this slight character sketch seems to me out of drawing. As we near the closing phases of Sir Eustace Morven's public activities we shall find his judgment becomes warped by his personal feelings. He was eager to praise those who were his friends ; but rather too ready to dispraise others who in any way stood in his path or remained unconvinced by his arguments. It was not—to do him justice—the thwarting of his personal ambitions that excited his ire and his irony, so much as opposition to his projects of reform and his passion for scientific research and strict phonetic spelling of African names. He was, I fear, like the late James McNeill Whistler, an adept in the gentle art of making enemies ; and like the great Florence Nightingale ready to bestow nick-names on the objects of his dislike. My own impressions of Sir Victor Barnet-Skettles (who was drowned in the torpedoed *Acarnania* returning from a confidential mission to Albania in 1915) were very different.—H. H. J.

matter too much to heart, though they might advise their respective governments—go slow, don't you know? . . . not hustle the natives, eh? Quite so much, eh? "Nous trouvons notre Commissaire, Morven—un peu mauvais coucheur . . . un peu difficile, même fanatique. . . . Cependant, notre bon gros public s'émeut facilement . . . hein? Faut le considérer, mon cher. . . . À tantôt, à ce soir, chez le bon Tudell, n'est-ce pas?"

Eustace, therefore, arriving soon afterwards and his card being brought in by an office-keeper, Albert Victor decided to give him rather a cool reception, and believed in so doing he would be meeting his Chief's wishes; for Africa was "off" as a standing dish just now and much more interesting topics were on, concerning new understandings or misunderstandings in the Far East, the Middle East and the Near East, and the only part of Africa which retained any interest for diplomacy was Morocco.

Eustace. "Oh—er—how de do. I hope Mrs. Skettles is quite well?"

The Whelp. "Mrs. *Barnet*-Skettles is quite well. What brings you up to town? Thought you were taking a rest in the country?"

Eustace. "Well, I can't prolong my rest indefinitely. I *have* rested and now I want to get to work again. Where am I to go?"

Albert Victor. "Well—er—er—difficult to say. Your special job has expired . . . we can't go on indefinitely with these atrocities, eh? I mean, they've all promised to reform, and the C.O.'s getting shirty about the whole business because Leo has threatened to send *his* Special Commissioner to study the Alcohol and Coolie question in Ceylon. All this poking your nose into other people's business is getting us heartily disliked."

Eustace. "Still, you know, we had a right to concern ourselves with Congo affairs . . . and it was a *British* Company, British Concessionnaires. . . ."

Albert Victor. "What if it was? The Belgians didn't, or the Portuguese didn't complain. . . . Can't be more Royalist than the King, what?"

Eustace. "Granted. . . . However, I can see the Office has lost interest in the thing; and after all . . . I only went out and did what I was asked to do . . . and (warming) it was no light job, I can tell you. . . .

"And my collections and my discoveries? And the mere

fact that I *have* set things right and got the natives reconciled to the whites" . . . (chokes a little in the gradual realization of the heartlessness of Pharaohs that know not Joseph. . . . A. V. B—S. meanwhile checking gracefully a slight yawn with an ink-stained paper-knife) . . . "However : I suppose I am not wanted any longer. My proper place, of course, is with the C.O."

Albert Victor. "Not sure you aren't right. As a matter of fact, Lord Lavington's been at the C.O. about you and said you thoroughly deserved a good post—a Governorship. They lent you to us and they *ought* to take you back and see you aren't the loser. Of course it would never do to shove you into diplomacy. Damned unfair to those who've entered the career in the regular way, eh ? . . ."

Eustace. "Well, that didn't prevent Lord Wiltshire from sending White to Constantinople and Brown to China . . ."

Albert Victor. "Ancient history, my dear chap. Nous avons changé tout cela, and Lord W.'s writ no longer runs. . . . However, I was saying we've been hammering at the C.O., but Choselwhit won't have you back at any price. Says you queered his plans about the Niger . . . and South Africa. . . ."

Eustace. "I ? . . ."

Albert Victor. "And you're always denouncing some flourishing industry because it's unfair to somebody. . . . Look here, old man : I yield to no one in my admiration for your pluck and your interesting way of putting your reports on paper ; but the long and short of it is you always seem to be in hot water with some one. . . . Well, there it is. Lord Lavington can't *make* Choselwhit have you if he don't want you. We can't send you back to Tripoli, 'cos old Bentley wants to finish his time there. Only place I can think of just now is Haiti. Not a bad climate, I'm told ; and you ought to feel at home at their Voodoo feasts after your experience of the Congo natives. . . . What do you say ? . . . *Of course* if you think you've had enough of foreign service. . . . Let's see ? How old are you ? Fifty-three ? Fifty-fourth year ? Well, you could get any doctor with your fever record to give you a certificate. . . . Ask leave to retire and we'll get the Treasury to fix your pension. . . .

"Who did you say, Joram ? Secretary, Italian Embassy ? All right. Bring him along. . . . Now, my dear Morven, think it over . . . awfully sorry to be so abrupt, but mustn't keep Italy waiting. . . . Ta ta ! Give my love to Aunt Suzanne, if you're going back to Deerhurst. I suppose she's pretty well

occupied now looking after 'Uncle Feenix,' as Portia calls him. . . . Ah! mon cher Bolsena. Permettez que je vous présente un de nos *grands* Africains, Sir Eustace Morven" (mutual bows). "Vous etes venu me voir pour cette affaire du Benadir, n'est-ce pas? Eh bien, asséyez vous. . . . Good-bye, Morven. . . . Asséyez vous et causons. . . ."

Eustace took counsel with Suzanne and Paul and his own thoughts and long fermenting plans. Paul said, "Take them at their word. You look worn out and you've been through a hell of a time this last three years. If any one has earned his leisured ease at home, it's you. . . . And with all those books to write! Screw out of them what pension you can. Come on our board—the salary for the directors is £700 a year. That, with your pension and what you've got of your own ought to be quite enough to live on comfortably. In time perhaps I can put other work in your way. I want some one now to take over part of *my* work at the office—foreign correspondence—for I'm getting interested in politics now, and when Parliament sits I'm pretty often at the House of Lords. Rupert cannot come into the business till he has left Cambridge and travelled a bit. . . . You fill the gap, old man. . . . And *by Jove!* . . . if *I'm* in the House of Lords, *you* shall be in the Commons, and between the two of us we'll set the Empire right. We'll demolish 'Chocho.'"

In the New Year's Honours of 1904, appeared the name of Sir Eustace Morven as Knight Commander of the Bath, "in recognition of his exceptionally important services in Africa."

In the spring of 1904, Sir Eustace Morven presented himself at the headquarters of the Liberal Party with a note to the Chief Whip from Lord Goring. . . .

"A candidate at next Election? Pay your own expenses? All right. Any particular seat in view? Where were you born?"

"In Islington . . . in what I think is called Canonbury . . . Porchester House. . . ."

"Keep up with the district?"

"Why no, not much. . . . Too often away in Africa. Still I think there must be some remaining who remember my father and mother."

"Hum. . . . Canonbury. That would be Central Islington . . . (*ting-ting*) . . . Jonas!"

"Sir?"

"Who sits for Central Islington?"

(A pause.) "Sir Wilfrid Abrahams."

"Conservative?" (Mr. Jonas assents.)

"Any Liberal candidate?"

"Yes, young Godolphin Allenthwaite."

"What is he?"

"Rather a rotter . . . rising young barrister . . . we pay part of his ex'es."

(The Chief Whip to Eustace.) "Well, there it is at present. If you're sure you wouldn't sooner try elsewhere, I'll see Allenthwaite, and if he isn't awfully keen on fighting old Abrahams's money-bags, we'll try and shove him into some other forlorn hope and adopt you as the official candidate instead. But Abrahams 'll want a deal of fighting. He's popular. . . . Good morning."

Soon after this Eustace became a member of the Eighty Club and the League of Young Liberals, and subscribed to this fund and to that fund; was put up at the National Liberal Club and was introduced to the Liberal Five Hundred of Central Islington . . . the Weasels, as they were locally called, from the chorus of the 'sixties,' specially perverted to meet their case:

"Up and down the City Road,
In and out the 'Eagle';
Glass of Port or something short,
Pop goes the weasel!"

In course of time, from frothing Chartists and Radicals they had become Liberals, as respectability came with middle age and a balance at the bank; and had moved their places of residence to Central Islington, where they were now the bourgeois stalwarts of the borough, carrying their nickname with them as a pawky joke.

In the two years that followed Eustace learnt much about the English politics of that pre-reform era that he could never have found in books. He had believed that his African reputation, the services he had rendered to the Empire, the gold medals awarded for his discoveries, and the newly earned Doctorate of Literature conferred on him by the University of London would have sufficed to ensure his election, when they were matched against mere civic worth and slug-a-bed conservatism. But he was surprised to find he must put

himself to school again and learn up at least a dozen "vital" questions of the day in which Islington would expect him to have hard and fast opinions, for or against, red-hot or ice-cold: Old Age Pensions; Taxation of Land Values; the Exclusion of Aliens; the Taxing of Unearned Increment; Local Option and the hundred ways of disentangling the State and the Community from the hundred-suckered tentacles of the Alcohol trades. There was the obvious necessity of reforming the House of Lords, a matter to which he had scarcely given a thought hitherto; there were enough Irish voters in Central Islington to necessitate a definite opinion on Home Rule. The enormous problem of Preferential Tariffs and the Taxation of Food, Free Trade versus Protection, alone required the most anxious consideration from a candidate eager to knit up the empire, yet equally desirous of avoiding a selfish policy of driving foreign trade away from the empire, or increasing the cost of living among its poorest citizens.

As fast as one subject was studied, mastered, and an opinion formed and expressed—sometimes to the obvious distaste of the electioneering agent, the local audience, or Headquarters, another rose menacing and not to be shirked. Chinese Labour in South Africa, for example. This was decided on as a stick with which to beat the party in power. To Eustace it seemed a measure ill-devised or otherwise, of departmental administration, to be decided in South Africa by South Africans. No. He couldn't approve of it, it was not a wholesome scheme; still he really could not feel such hatred of it as to enjoy the day of procession through the muddy streets of North Central London, from Canonbury to Hyde Park, the march down Park Lane, shaking fists at the South African millionaires' houses (where, as often as not, he had dined in the past to discuss rational methods of exploiting African products,) and the surfeit of waggon-oratory in the Park; incoherent nonsense, shouted and screamed by voices weakening with the effort and half drowned in the unreasoning applause of an ill-conditioned crowd—whose general impression of the whole argument was that a yellow Chinaman with a pigtail was about—if they did not turn out the Tory Government—to rob them of the Big Loaf.

At first he shrank from the coarser lines of argument—the attribution of scandalous corruption and greed to political opponents, the placing of halos round the heads of the Liberal statesmen of the day, and the frequent allusions to Mr. Glad-

stone with bared head and dropped voice as to a faultless, divinely inspired man. It was awkward meeting Mr. Balfour at dinner at 44, Portland Place when that very afternoon he had been led into characterizing him as a swindler, sneak, and hypocrite, and one who delighted in grinding the noses of the poor. He shuddered if told that reporters had been present, and still more dreaded that any of his men-of-the-world friends or his comrades in science should stray so far afield from the amenities of life as to come to Canonbury to hear him speak, at a benefit performance got up for an improvident shoemaker, at a workmen's club, or—hatefullest experience of all !—at one of the out-door orations that were required of him by his pitiless crowd of backers.

These for various reasons were held in the dreary season of bad weather and muddy streets between November and April, and involved going about with a portable stand and his Agent and the paid nucleus of a crowd (though he ignored the paying) ; baring one's head, and suddenly addressing the vacuity of an ugly court or square or street that led to a blank wall in impassioned accents, calling on the government of the day to resign and face the music, to tax Ground Values, to reform the marriage laws and bring divorce within a poor man's means—the subject being selected by the Agent to suit the palate of the neighbourhood. If it was a Saturday night, a real crowd collected, and then Eustace became so obviously out of the picture that the comic man of his staff had to be called upon, and was sometimes so much of a success that the listeners offered to give *him* their votes in preference to the Cove from Africa.

He thought after this preliminary rough-and-tumble to impart a more statesmanlike tone to his candidature by giving a series of lectures on his life and experiences in Africa. He might in this way justify and co-ordinate his views on the burning question of the hour, " Chinese Slavery." So he hired a hall, a good lantern and fairly reliable operator, and borrowed from the Royal Geographical Society such slides as he could not make from his own photographs. But these lectures, these really painstaking lectures given at stuffy, smelly, grubby Halls or at Radical Clubs or the Assembly Rooms of great public houses, where on other occasions Foresters or Friendly Societies had their convivial meetings, were invariably a frost, the audience consisting mainly of his paid and unpaid body of " workers," and a claque recruited by his agent. There were each time, of course, a dozen, two dozen strangers,

but not enough to warrant the idea of making a great impression on the electorate.

He next tried propaganda through the Churches. The Church of England at that time and in that part of Islington looked askance at a Liberal ; the Church of the Second Advent was even more conservative. The old solicitor, Robinson of Highbury, was dead ; dead or drifted elsewhere were many of his boyhood's acquaintances of the Adventist Church. He hesitated specially to recall himself to any that were elderly enough to have remembered his parents or himself in his youth, lest it should be necessary to explain that he no longer held their tenets.

So, incessantly prodded by his agent, he claimed the support of the other Free Churches, and in their chapels or their secular halls or schoolrooms delivered his lectures on Africa. A charge levied for admittance seemed to increase and not diminish the audience, and the proceeds then could be given to a missionary society or a church charity. But the lecturer found himself swept into the stream of missionary propaganda, which carried him beyond the plain statements he was willing, even desirous of making about the *ethical* value of missionary work. He displeased himself and his sense of what was honest and right by taking part in long and inane prayers to a God, made after the image of an Islington rate-payer, by singing hymns composed by clergymen who believed the universe to be geocentric, and otherwise giving tacit or vocal support to religious beliefs he did not share. It would revolt him the more if, on leaving such outpourings of the spirit, such unctuous displays of piety, his Agent (a Methodist but also a man of business) put his hand up and directed a hoarse, rum-shrub-flavoured whisper into Eustace's face : " *Keep* it up—*Keep* it up ! You're doing splendidly."

To balance things, he had to accept " with the greatest pleasure " opportunities of addressing " non-politically " the Jewish residents in Canonbury, the " Maccabæans " or the Zionists. The proviso " non-politically " was inserted so that they might keep faith with his opponent's Agent to whom they had pledged their votes ; and the non-committal subject was usually the Holy Land, illustrated very unreally by coloured slides of garish brightness meant to allure colonists.

Sir Wilfrid Abrahams came on one of these occasions and a formal introduction was effected. He—Sir Wilfrid—was a genial old soul who could not have lectured to save his life,

and had never made a speech in the House, though he was a diligent attendant. He was just a very wealthy, very philanthropic Jew who had made much money out of South-east Islington and thought he would like to represent in the House of Commons a division of the borough in which he resided. In his case money spoke, and nearly all the political talking was left to his agent who received a steady six hundred a year for looking after Sir Wilfrid's constituency, and therefore was anything but pleased at the substitution for the carpet-bagging barrister of a distinguished African traveller, who although he might be a bit of an ass was in some funny way attracting interest. Sir Wilfrid took the change very good-humouredly ; even admitted he *liked* Eustace. The prospect of a fight for his seat stimulated him, and he told his Rachel that if he was to lose the seat he didn't mind doing so to that explorer fellow.

Lady Abrahams—vast, sleepy, good-natured, but desiring more brightness in life than Canonbury could give her, opined it was about time they moved to a gayer part of London and let the eldest son take their fine old eighteenth century house as his home. The agent, however, saw his six hundred a year endangered and decided to search for a chink in the armour of the Liberal candidate. Conservative electioneering agents in such circumstances generally sought the advice of Baxendale Strangeways, who kept in his office of the *London Argus* records or dossiers of notabilities whom it might be profitable at some time or another to attack.

Most of the Liberal Five Hundred seemed to be Masons of some kind or another, or to belong to lesser secret societies of supposed benevolent or friendly character, freer than Freemasonry in the overt silliness of their forms and ceremonies. To woo this class of elector, Eustace, not a Mason, could not invade the arcana of the Lodges, but he was provided with ample opportunities, nevertheless, of spending money on his possible Friendly Society constituents.

And money in the form of subscription to charities and benevolent funds was by no means all the sacrifice he had to make. Of course, in entering on this political adventure, he soon realized that it was a matter of spending two or three thousand pounds. Within the law—and the Liberal headquarters like the Conservative was amply informed by its legal advisers how to evade or undermine the law—the seat had to be bought somehow. It was not the money he grudged, any more than Paul sighed over the outlay needed to start

Lucilla Smith in a respectable career ; it was the *time*, the personal effort that both of them regretted ; the one over his discourses that did not even convince himself, as to reforms that nobody really seemed to want ; the other at the courting of actors, actresses and press critics, and suppers of dreadful joviality and indigestibility at the Garrick Club. All Eustace really wanted was to get into Parliament to represent the interests, views, sufferings of twenty-five millions of Africans since they could not have a representative of their own colour. He still fatuously believed that the right party for such an advocate was the Liberal Party ; the more so as he found himself in general agreement with its programme of home reforms.

" Why "—would Eustace complain to Suzanne and to Paul on his brief holidays from electioneering—for things political were now tightening up and every one agreed that Mr. Balfour could not carry on much longer—" *Why* cannot some constituency elect me for my knowledge of Africa alone ? Surely Africa, the well-being of Africa—is of gigantic importance to London, to Manchester with its cotton trade, to Liverpool, to Glasgow, to Bristol ? But if they won't, couldn't they name their price and let me pay it down—if I could afford it ? "

Of course in this argument he *quite* misunderstood the British electors of those morally distant days. Such wanted some monetary advantage for their exercise of the franchise : from the direct half-crown tendered by the helper—of a subordinate—of the head Conservative agent—to some gentleman in a public house, to the respectable citizen's pleasure in the public park presented by the Liberal candidate. But they must also satisfy their consciences that the candidate voiced their own opinions, or at any rate possessed opinions of his own that were reasonable and reputable.

So, in winning over the Liberal Five Hundred—the Weasels —to warm advocacy of his candidature, Eustace must identify himself with their friendly societies and mock-mystery affiliations ; all of which when reduced to their simplest expression might be summed up in rum shrub and bad music and quarrels over the distribution of the funds.

He had with much inward groaning to take an active part in solemn fooleries in tawdry rooms behind public houses. It was one night the Ancient Order of Buffaloes, another the Magnificent Association of Druids, on a third occasion the Guild of Jolly Boys ; or the Oddfellows, or the Foresters.

At any rate the ritual was very similar. You presented yourself at a closed door with a "brother" to vouch for you. A panel in the door slides and the unprepossessing face of a Buffalo or a Druid peers at you. The countersign or pass word is given and the door is opened into a long saloon thick with an atmosphere of tobacco smoke and beer. There are a few members present playing games of chance or discussing the odds. A Druid or a Buffalo is at the piano, vamping hideously with splay fingers. There is a call to attention from the Grand Master (an undertaker of great political influence). The new "brother" comes forward with his sponsors and is quickly initiated ("Cut the cackle and come to the 'osses," is the general idea), pays his footing, and calls for drinks round.

Then he is asked to oblige the company with a song or a speech, and Eustace being no songster gives—as pre-arranged by his Agent—a discourse on Plural Voting or on Housing and Sanitation to which nobody listens. Or, for once, he may be very unruly or very obtuse and launch forth on a diatribe against Street Betting or the evils of Food Adulteration, at which the scattered audience will look blue or even take his denunciations as personal reflections on their own probity.

Then outside the secret societies of the lower bourgeoisie there were the benefit concerts and entertainments which seemed of weekly occurrence in connection with unnumbered Trade Unions or charitable associations of a rather lawless kind. A large hall or not too successful or reputable theatre was taken or lent. The talent on the boards was mainly amateur or was recruited from professionals at the beginning of their careers. The songs were of the treacley sentimental, the insanely patriotic, or the most grossly facetious kind. The dancing was sometimes good, but at others so suggestive as to vie with the most Bacchic performances Eustace had ever seen in Paris or North Africa. A constant feature in the programme was the "Female Impersonator"—a brawny young man with bushy eyebrows and an extravagant bust, not too obviously *postiche;* who demeaned himself in such a way, with falsetto song, dance and gesture as paled in impropriety the most denounced performances at the duly licensed Palaces of Varieties or the scarcely mentioned night-clubs.

Yet, through such displays of indecency and coarse allusions to the natural functions, the wives, sweethearts, and mothers of the jolly, slightly inebriated men sat—one could not say unmoved, but—unoffended; laughing where the males were only chuckling; nudging, encoring, and even yelling out

interpretations that the performer left to the imagination of the audience. ("So this," thought Eustace, "is the 'great heart of the people' to which I must appeal in order to be able to represent Africa and the Crown Colonies in the House of Commons and protest with effect against faults in our Colonial government!")

For of course his Agent attached the greatest importance to his presence on all these occasions when the hat went round for the benefit of some railway porter who had lost a finger in shunting or some tipsy glazier who had broken his arm. At some point in the middle of the variety entertainment the Agent would come on to the platform and say: "Comrades all" (or "Ladies and Gentlemen"—selection of invocation left to the inspiration of the moment).

"Our Lib'ral"—voice from the back of the Hall—"'E ain't so very liberal as *I* can see." "Silence, *please*. Our Lib'ral and Radical candidate, Sir Eustace Morven, will now 'ave the pleasure of addressing you for a few minutes," (voices from the back: "'Ope 'e'll cut it short!" "*Shut* up! Now then Yusy"—Broadmead's old nickname had somehow reached Islington—"*Speak* up, ole man.")

And Eustace in a reefer suit (to look jovial) would appear on the platform in front of a sagging drop scene, and—his voice hoarse with tobacco smoke and his throat dry with the dust left still floating from the tremendous stamping applause at the last cavort of the Female Impersonator which had displayed a saucy pair of pink-insertioned drawers—Eustace, blushing for very shame at his incongruous position, would proceed to rouse the audience to some sense of Mr. Balfour's cowardice in not immediately dissolving Parliament and giving us the chance to bring in a Government *of* the People *by* the People, etc. etc. (Faint "'Ear, 'ear"; and "Brother Jenkins will now give us 'is famous song: *The Truth or a Loy, which shall it be?*")

But insincere as much of Morven's public oratory was in these two years of electioneering, he was latterly very much in earnest over his invocation to Mr. Balfour to put his fortunes to the test by an appeal to the Electorate—"and get it over," was his private comment. The strain of this two years' work in London was telling very much on his health, more so perhaps than a life in the jungle. He wished to earn his necessary £700 a year in the great office of the Dombey Line as a director who really contributed expert knowledge in

return for his fees. Several mornings in the week he worked there. His afternoons and evenings were mainly devoted to Islington, a region he grew to hate with an intensity that seemed to border on the ridiculous. He tried to engender sentiment by looking upon it as his natal place, but found this only led him to upbraid his parents for having settled down there. Porchester House still stood, and he had even been over it with scarcely-concealed shudders. It was tenanted by a prosperous pork butcher's family and the pork butcher was one of his supporters and a decent sort; but wife and family were insupportably vulgar and of an aggressive vulgarity. They were ascending in the scale. "Father was thinking of selling his business," and the daughters then fully "espected" when they were severed from any connection with the stye ("We're going to turn it into a pleasure farm, don't yer know,") that Eustace would "interduce" them to his West End friends.

An occasional week-end in the country only increased his distaste for fried-fish shops and pawnbrokers, and rows and rows of respectable dwellings, all of them with grained doors and marble-papered, narrow "halls," redolent of the meals of generations and tenanted by dull-witted folk, far less intelligent in the uptake than the Negro.

He would have lost the election—when the Dissolution *did* come—but for the Agent of Sir Wilfrid Abrahams—and Bella Delorme.

His strenuous work, and the loyalty of the Liberal Five Hundred, and the favour he met with among the more serious of the better-class Canonbury population sufficiently alarmed the Conservative agent for the continuance of his £600 a year, as to cause him to search very diligently for that chink in the armour of Eustace's reputation.

For a preliminary fee of Fifty Guineas he was soon placed in possession of Bax's slender store of scandal attached to Eustace's name: who was believed to have passed a week or two with Bella at the Hotel Bargepole at Brighton in the remote 'eighties; and who certainly visited Monte Carlo with her in 1885, because Bax had met him and her in the entrance hall to the gambling rooms.

"'S *that* all?" said the Agent. "Why, it ain't worth the money. Positive innocence, I call it."

"Well, my dear chap, if you knew French you would probably understand the meaning of 'La plus belle fille au monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a.' But look here. Old Abra-

hams is rich, would like to keep this seat at the next election? You don't want him to lose it, 'cos I suppose, as his regular agent, you get what is it? £800 a year——?"

"Go *on!* Who are you getting at? Not 'alf as much."

"Well, at any rate, you're keen on keeping this fellow Morven out? If you're able to put down, say £2,000" (Agent *thought* he could, reflecting that Sir Wilfrid never checked his campaigning expenses parsimoniously), "we'll start a newspaper straight away in Islington and give this rotter *hell.* We'll call it the—the—the *Islington Alarum;* bring it out once a week and post a copy to every middle class or lower middle class elector—especially the religious ones."

This deal was done somewhere about the early summer of 1905. For purposes like these Bax always had at hand a selection of lesser devils with appalling past records of which they had grown unashamed, who were ready at a moment's notice to play the gad-fly and take the risk of personal chastisement or of libel action. The *Islington Alarum* in its first number called on the good people of this grand old borough to WAKE UP. . . . Asked them how much longer they were going to tolerate wolves in sheep's clothing, whited sepulchres, and so forth.

In a later number it got nearer the mark. "Central Islington, which had for generations" (it was only given a member in 1885) "been represented in our legislature by men of the highest distinction" (Sir Wilfrid Abrahams, honest and good man though he was, carried on, on a very large scale, a great pawnbroking business, though he allowed his sons' ambitions to contemplate Bond Street, high class bric-à-brac and Old Masters) . . . "Central Islington will never" (the *Alarum* predicted) "entrust its suffrage to a debauchee and gambler. . . ." ("Rather neat that," said the lesser devil to the master devil, who scanned the copy with a frowning brow, "No action for libel because we state an obvious truth, and don't say *he's* the debauched gambler. . . . See?")

These innuendoes seemed to Eustace so outrageous that he rushed up to London ("A Well Wisher," of course, had sent him a specimen by post) from Deerhurst and had a confabulation with his Agent at No. 1, Ebury Street. "*Surely* we can go for him *now*, that unknown scoundrel, and smash him?"

The Agent fingered his chin. . . . "Ever been in Monte Carlo?"

"Why, yes—er—but a long time ago. . . ."

"Go there alone?"

"Well—er—I went there with friends——"

"One of them an actress——?"

"What if she *were?*" said Eustace, "I don't see what business it is of any one here. . . . She's an excellent character ——"

"Still, if I were you, I'd leave the rag alone. Case wouldn't come on, I expect, till the Election was over, and you'd only be made to look ridiculous. . . ."

In the next number "A Constant Reader" wrote asking what was meant by the allusion to "debauched gamblers"? Surely the writer of the article could not have had in view a gentleman who had spoken so strongly against betting on horse races and who had objected to the vulgarity of songs and dances at the reunions of Islington workers where honest mirth held sway?

And so on. . . .

And it occurred now that quite six hundred of the serious minded in the electorate were asking Eustace's Agent what steps his man was intending to take to deny these imputations? Because they were not going to give their votes to a gambler or a man who dealt lightly with women—an actress, they had heard it was—Probably kept her hidden away in that west-end flat of his that none of his future constituents had been invited to see, etc., etc.

All these troubles Eustace took to Suzanne or discussed with Paul at the Office, and Paul retailed them half humorously to his sister . . . generally now at Deerhurst; in fact 52 Brook Street was let.

"Eustace," wrote Suzanne, one day in the late autumn of 1905: "I have an idea that Mr. Arthur is going to resign, or dissolve Parliament very shortly. I've been in communication with a friend of yours about your election. I want you to do *this—blindly*. The Grand—once the Philharmonic —is preparing its Christmas Pantomime. It has closed for rehearsals all day, but is to be hired at night under certain conditions. Your Agent at any rate could easily secure it for one night, say December 2 or December 9—mustn't get too near the issue of the writs. If there is any difficulty, let me know, and I will communicate with the other friend I mentioned.

"When you've fixed up the theatre, get up some excuse for a grand Tamasha, a winding up of your campaign—songs and speeches—anything you like, with a gap in the middle

which *I* will fill. (Ask no questions and you'll be told no lies. But—your life on't, carry out my directions !)

" Then issue broadcast invitations to all Central Islington to come. Admittance Free, and say on the placards : ' On this occasion an old favourite returns to Islington.' And give me your Agent's *name, address* and *telephone No.*"

Eustace did as he was bid. His Agent placed himself in communication with the imperious Countess, and afterwards in reply to Eustace's peevish and fractious questions smiled mysteriously and said, " It'll all be right *on* the night," and otherwise began to use much theatrical slang.

The night came. Mr. Balfour had resigned, the Liberals were in office and the date of the General Election would soon be announced—probably in January.

Vague expectations of a great scandal arose, for the Conservatives were known to have drilled a party of adverse questioners and indignant booers ; so it needed no persuasion for all Central Islington to flock to the Grand on Eustace's invitation. The building was filled to overflowing and the police anticipated trouble. Eustace with a party was in the Royal box. Only the stage box on the grand tier was empty. His Agent, an unquestioned despot, had decided that the opening part of the programme should not be speeches, but patriotic songs and party choruses and tableaux vivants (rendered easier by the proximity of pantomime properties) showing the Big Loaf and the Little Loaf, Chinese Labour, etc.

At nine o'clock the great curtain dropped. The band played a few bars of " Pop goes the Weasel " (which few recognized) ; and a stoutish, elderly lady, in a magnificent evening gown, stood in the middle of the stage just over the foot-lights. A brief pause. And the orchestra recommenced the opening bars. The lady sang in a strident voice of considerable carrying power :

" Up and down the City Road,
In and out the ' Eagle ' ;
Glass of Port or something short,
Pop goes the weasel ! "

(A second's pause of absolute silence. Immense audience completely mystified. Lady speaks in a voice which makes every syllable heard.)

" Ladies and Gentlemen !—or *no !* Don't let's have that rot—Men and Women of Islington ! I sang those silly words many and many a time on these boards in Panto and in

Variety entertainments, in the days when this theatre was called the Philharmonic. *I'm Bella Delorme* . . . (Hurricane of cheers) . . . Bella Delorme ; and many's the time I sang and danced to your fathers and mothers . . . me, and my dear old friends, mostly dead now, Selina Dolaro, Nelly Bromley, Fred Delavigne. . . . But there, I haven't come here to-night to read my memoirs. I've come to ask you to behave with common decency to your candidate—no, I'll say to *both* your candidates. . . ." And at this moment the spellbound audience saw the empty box on the grand tier fill up with the ample figures of Sir Wilfrid and Lady Abrahams. " Behave, I was sayin', with common decency to both your candidates. You can't want Sir Eustace Morven " (a killing glance and a half curtsey at the paralysed Eustace) " to lose the seat through your believing a lot of slanders spread about *'im* " (Bella in her emotion was becoming " peuple ") . . . *'im* and *me* ; and suttingly Sir Wilfrid is too much of a gentleman to want to be re-elected by means of lies spread by a wretch I'm goin' to tell you something about." (Sir Wilfrid rose and confirmed this by a bow.)

Then Bella gave the two or three thousand people present the leading facts of Bax's adult life. I won't repeat them here. He's still alive and I mightn't be able to prove her statements, dimly remembered ; and Bella is too infirm to come to my assistance.

" Now," she went on, " as to 'im and me. Sir Eustace is a brave, good gentleman ; it's an honour to have known 'im. I certainly did know him, many years ago. And I certainly *did* go travelling in France with 'im *and so did me 'usband*, William Strangeways—Bax's brother, to his lasting shame : William Strongbow he used to call himself for a stage name. You've seen him act many and many a time, I'll be bound. He'd be here to-night *and proud to speak up for Sir Eustace*, if he hadn't a clot in his leg—Phlebitis, the doctors call it, but you needn't laugh : it's got nothing to do with flea-bites.

. . .

" Yes : there was me 'usband and a poor young girl, dead long since of consumption, who we were trying to cure by taking her a trip to the Riviera. It's quite true we did go into the gambling rooms—and so would every man-jack of you if you were lucky enough to be within reach. I lost a matter of ten francs and I believe Sir Eustace—but there ! It all happened before most of you were born—won a matter of five pounds, which he spent on chocolates for the ladies of

the party. . . ." (Sir Wilfrid Abrahams here left the front of his box and presently stood beside Bella on the stage. Audience struck dumb.)

"Now," went on Bella—"Ah, how d'ye do, Sir Wilfrid? . . . Now I don't come here to talk politics. . . . Six of one and half a dozen of the other, *I* say. This, here," (indicating Sir Wilfrid) "is a much older friend of mine than Sir Eustace. He gave me a helping hand when I was starting a theatre company of me own and he hasn't regretted it; I *mean*, he got his money back and something on top. But he was—and is—a regular old trump. Vote for him if you like. . . . You might elect a far worse man. But don't be misled into giving him your votes because you believe one word of my blackguard brother-in-law's lies." (Thunders of applause, only checked because Sir Wilfrid holds up his hand to claim a hearing.)

"Fellow-citizens of Islington, I have represented you in Parliament for a matter of ten years, and I shall be much honoured if you re-elect me a few weeks hence. But I ain't going to owe my seat to any dirty trick. My opponent, Sir Eustace is as good a chap as you can find—if you won't 'ave me (Cheers). He's an honourable gentleman and the lies spread about him and this lady, this old friend of mine. . . . Dear, dear! 'Ow it *do* carry one back! . . . Pop goes the Weasel and all!!—What was I saying? Why, it's none of my doing and I'm here to-night to protest against it. It ain't clean fighting, and if it's been done by any one on my be'alf: I . . . I . . . (last words roared) . . . I REPUDIATE HIM. . . ."

(Nearly apoplectic, Sir Wilfrid retires to his box and to the approving lady of his bosom; but not before Eustace, hurried to the stage by his Agent, has clasped him by the hand and has raised the beringed fingers of Bella to his lips. The band strikes up, "For *He's* a jolly good *Fel*-low——" which may apply to either candidate. . . .

The subsequent proceedings interest us no more, for they were of the nature of an anti-climax.)

So Bella Delorme won Eustace his election . . for he got in for Central Islington by a majority of 122. . . . And Sir Wilfrid and Lady Abrahams retired with much geniality to Hyde Park Gardens and gave Soirées musicales at which Eustace, and Countess Feenix and Lady Goring were not infrequently present in the season.

As to Bax, he never really recovered from Bella's fifteen

minutes' résumé of his sources of income and multiform activities. He sold the *London Argus* (it's quite a respectable paper now and is strong on Eugenics) ; tried one or two daring coups in illicit journalism, and at last got landed in prison as a First Class misdemeanant, for Contempt of Court.

*** The reader with a good memory of London things may find it hard to recall any adequate press report of the last performance of Bella Delorme on the boards of the famous Islington theatre. The episode was so astonishingly outside traditional electioneering tactics, so fertile in libel actions that the London Press fought shy of it. For the most part you will only see this meagre paragraph if you hunt for it in the files of the British Museum :—

Amusing Incident at a Liberal Meeting in Islington.

When Sir E. Morven was addressing his supporters at a soirée musicale at the Grand Theatre, the sitting member for the division appeared in a grand tier box ; and a popular actress (now retired from the Stage) came before the curtain and said both Liberal candidate and sitting member (Sir Wilfred Abrahams) were old friends of hers, and that personally she took no interest in politics and didn't care which won. A vote of confidence in Sir Eustace Morven was subsequently carried with a few dissentients ; and the proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

CHAPTER XXIII

DISILLUSIONMENT

"Sir Eustace as member of *Par*liament
Carries every Bill he chooses,
To his measures all assent,
Showing that fairies have their uses. . . ."

Sang Suzanne to the music in *Iolanthe*, as Eustace entered her boudoir at Deerhurst Park, down for a week's holiday and pheasant shooting with Paul.

That evening after dinner they sat in the large drawing-room, deliciously warm, with two log fires burning at either end, not too much lit ; one oasis of light marking the writing table at which Carinthia sat plying a fountain pen over a long letter to Rupert, who was travelling through the West Indies on one of the Dombey liners ; another radiating from a tall standard lamp with a mauve shade, under which Paul sprawled at his ease on a low-cushioned chair, reading a novel. The rest of the room had cavernous depths of dusky shadow through which rich things were dimly seen by ruddy firelight. Eustace and Suzanne sat on high-backed arm-chairs and gazed into the glowing furnace of the logs. Lord Feenix took his evening meal in bed, and Suzanne had just half-an-hour for a talk with her friend before she went up to read to her stricken husband.

"I suppose," said Eustace, "*you* were the fairy, or the Queen of the Fairies ; it was you that thought of making an appeal to Bella to save the situation ? Bella *splendide mendax atque prevaricatrix*. . . ."

"If you mean by that garbled Latin . . ." ("It isn't garbled, I carefully compiled it from a dictionary") "that Bella deliberately departed from the truth or suggested an evasion of the whole truth in regard to that ridiculously old story of your goings-on in France or elsewhere, I hold she had a perfect right to do so. There should be in such things—especially when they are, as that was, *sans suites*—a seven years' limitation. When seven years of blameless life have ensued no one should have the right to burrow back farther

into one's past. At any rate, she got you in, and she really seems to have rendered a great public service by squelching Bax : which is what no judge or jury or blackmailed statesman has yet been able to do. I see he is going to sell the *Argus* and start off on a ' health cruise ' to Australia, *pour se faire peau neuve.* Poor Australia ! "

" I'm infinitely grateful to you and Bella . . . I think I may say, *equally* grateful. . . ."

" All right ; I won't be jealous. . . ."

" But at the same time, it does seem to me preposterous that I wanted to get into the House to deal with African questions and because I know more than most people *about* African questions, and yet I am really elected by a London constituency because they believe I . . . or because they admired Bella for taking the bull by the horns in that daring manner. . . ."

" What *does* it matter, my *dear* friend ? " said Suzanne with a little yawn, " You're *in* Parliament, now. You must set about reforming the whole thing from an Imperial point of view. Don't be too introspective. . . . I must be going up to John in a few minutes."

" How is he now ? "

" Very bad, I'm afraid ; very bad in health, but so *much, much* better in disposition that I feel if he dies I shall miss him dreadfully. Do you notice, by the bye, how grey my hair has turned ? . . ."

" No, I don't."

" Then you ought to see an oculist, you must be going colour blind. But *John* did, all at once, the other day, and raised his poor right hand to try and stroke it in a deprecating way. He seldom says much, because his speech is difficult and he is conscious of muddling his words. . . . Oh dear ! Oh dear ! *How* humanity is tortured ? I can't believe, any more than you, there's a Deity who takes the *slightest* interest in us or has any pity for our individual sufferings. . . . We are just the chaff and dust in some colossal experiment. . . . We've got to work out our own salvation. . . ." (A pause.)

" You know Victor and Myra are coming back from Gibraltar ? John seems really glad. He's taken quite a different view of the marriage since Myra's second boy was born. The ' succession ' seems safe to him now. They've called their second boy ' Walter.' *Dear, dear* Wally. . . ." (A pause.) " No. I'm not crying. I love to think about him and talk about him ; it keeps him living still. The Dower House is being got ready for Victor and Myra. I'll motor you over

there to-morrow. You don't *really* want to waste time shooting pheasants? You only pretended to think you did to please John, who feels it isn't right to come into the country unless you kill some bird or beast or fish. . . .

"Now, Carry dear; you mustn't write any more or you'll bring on an eye-headache; go up to bed because I'm going to Father and your uncles won't want you to stay and listen to their manly conversation. . . . Good night, dears all."

The Liberal leaders, especially the Whips, looked rather dubiously on Eustace. They had regarded Central Islington as a forlorn hope and him as a greenhorn for undertaking it. He had won it, but the intervention of Bella Delorme was a trifle scandalous. They all believed in the truth of Bax's stories. . . . Hadn't *they* done similar things when young men? Didn't they still take a furtive delight in visiting the Cercle des Etrangers et des Bains de Mer? And really it was Bella's personality which had triumphed in Central Islington, and not the Liberal programme.

Then, as 1906 grew into 1907, and more markedly as Campbell Bannerman was succeeded by Mr. Asquith, Eustace became more and more unmanageable. He had uttered that fearful heresy—not as a joke in private drawing-rooms, but on a platform—"Votes for Women. . . ." He had asked awkward, very awkward questions about the Natives in Natal, about Coolie labour, about the Congo, about Persia and Russia, about everything the Colonial Office or Foreign Office did not want discussed, and had compelled the Parliamentary Under Secretaries to charge their consciences with an unusual number of lies.

He had pounced on the Board of Trade and its callous neglect of British seamen, of third-class steamer passengers, of railway passengers, of overworked railway employés, of miners and safety in mines; and had even reduced a dear old buffer, who had been pushed into the Board of Trade, to retire in tears to his private room.

Eustace could not be got to see that *some* things, *some* conventions must be respected: that reform in the staffing of the Public Departments of State had stopped in 1860 and the question wasn't to be reopened: that there must, in the nature of things, be *some* sinecures and consecrated jobs; square pegs must occasionally be rammed into round holes —for the sake of the Party. The welfare of the Party must occasionally override the welfare of the State or of the bloom-

ing Empire. Any fool (except Eustace) could see that.

Attempts were made once or twice in 1908 to get rid of him by offering him, with affected *bonhomie,* a remote Governorship or a Special Commission to the heart of South America; but Eustace said although he would have been delighted to accept five years ago, he had now settled down in England and preferred to remain there for health reasons.

After that they left him alone, and he slipped into the undefined position of an independent member. They omitted to ask him to official parties and receptions. He was a puzzle to the Conservatives and they were afraid of his revolutionary views on some subjects. They, also, desired no reforms in Foreign, Indian, Colonial services. They thought him outrageous, farcical, in wishing to recast the education of the governing classes. "What did a gentleman, an Indian Civil servant want with . . . Botany (Ha-ha!) . . . Ethnology (". . . is that what you call it? . . . D'you remember that old joke in Punch. . . ? 'I am going to the Anthropological Institute, my dear. . . .' 'And where do they *anthropolodge,* papa?' Ha-ha! Very good.")

The Irish thought to rope him in, but he attacked the rule of the priest and the poteen, and he had much too modern views about the spelling of the Irish language. Indeed they were annoyed to find he knew Irish and they didn't. At the time when the agitation about the disestablishment of the Church in Wales was fomented, Eustace paid a long visit to the land of his fathers; and finding that such a large proportion of the edifices of the Welsh Church had first been Druid temples (the archæological evidence was undeniable), then Temples of the Bona Dea, or the God Mars, or of Cæsar, then Early Christian, next Irish Christian, and after that Roman Catholic, before they became Anglican, was so impressed by this magnificent historic continuity (as well as by the excellent character of the Welsh clergy) that he voted against any such measure. No. I am mistaken. He paired with an agnostic Conservative because at the last moment Mr. F. E. S—— uttered his famous speech stating that all the nations of the Earth stood *aghast* before this contemplated robbery of God, and gave Mr. Chesterton the opportunity for his immortal poem "Chuck it, Smith"; at which Eustace was so delighted that he mentally erased Mr. Chesterton from his secret list for the Guillotine and asked him to dine at the Reform.

Eustace was a poor speaker, except on rare occasions when

some supreme folly or crass job or gross injustice deeply moved him. But you may be quite sure that he had few opportunities of addressing the House. After his maiden speech and his first few lamentable exhibitions of an anti-sociable disposition, the Speaker suffered from an obliquity of vision whenever he rose, and Eustace had once more the uncomfortable feeling of being like Mr. Wells's *Invisible Man*. If you want to know how this could be in the Mother of Parliaments, read the works of Mr. Hilaire Belloc dealing with this period, with their suggestions of the rigging of debates by an understanding between the Government, the Opposition, and the authority of the Chair.

At the same time Eustace could not form a Party with Mr. Belloc because he loathed beer, looked askance at Roman remedies for political unrest, and would have liked to send Mr. Chesterton to the Guillotine for his reactionary opinions. (See *supra*.) Gradually he came to realize his Parliamentary career was a mistake, and that Bella Delorme had placed Dead Sea fruit within his reach. It was indeed mortifying to his petty personal ambitions—such as even the most disinterested politician possesses. Of course sometimes, though muted by the Speaker or misreported or scarcely reported, he made a hit. Sometimes he pierced the ministerial armour. But immediately the fruits of victory were wrested from him. By an agile *volte face* the Ministry or the Opposition adopted his reform or his policy and carefully left his name unmentioned, did not choose him as the chairman of the Royal Commission or the sub-committee, did not even put him on the committee, put Mr. Belloc, perhaps, instead.

If any one had questioned this exclusion—but, as Eustace was an outlaw no one did—they would have replied: "We have accorded due representation to the leading parties in the House; we can hardly recognize a Party of One." ("Ha-ha!" and "Loud Laughter.")

Lord Feenix died in the early summer of 1907. Victor and Myra eventually came to live with their four children at Deerhurst. In 1908 Eustace had asked Suzanne to marry him, but she had declined.

"I'd have said 'yes' if Feenix had died five years ago or earlier. I might even have run away with you, ages ago, if you'd pressed me persistently and if there hadn't been Carrie to think about. I've really loved you, Eustace, if you want to know. I've really embraced you in my soul flights. But

I'm past all that phase now. I suppose it went with the change of life. I don't care a hang for appearances now, with all my children out in the world. If you're ill, I shall come and take up my quarters with the Baigents and nurse you. I think more about you than any one in the world except perhaps Carrie—and Walter. But I'm not going to make myself ridiculous . . . in my own eyes. And a woman does so if she re-marries after the child-bearing age is over. Entends-tu ? And I don't want to drop my title ; it helps so with the Police in these Suffrage struggles."

" Well, but you needn't. . . ."

" Oh, that's all very well. But it sounds so odd when the butler announces, ' Sir Eustace Morven and the Countess Feenix. . . .' Like a case of Free Love in persons of advanced middle age. No : it's much more distinguished to go on as we are . . . the dearest of friends and able to talk just as freely as if we were married. I, at least, am unreserved. I don't think kissing is very sanitary, but you may give me *one* good kiss on the forehead if that will content you, only don't disarrange my ' confection,' as Blandine calls it."

" No thank you," said Eustace, quite huffily.

He did not persist, however, because of growing uneasiness about his health, never very robust since his African fevers and the shock of Walter's death. He had led anything but a quiet life since 1903. His close attention to shipping business in the week-day mornings and to Parliament in the afternoons, evenings and nights ; his journeys to Ireland and Wales to investigate the questions of the day, or farther afield in the vacations to France, Germany, America to lecture or to take part in scientific congresses had exhausted his reserves of strength. Symptoms of kidney trouble began to appear. He became acquainted with those depths of weariness and exhaustion which are not exactly faintness, are far beyond mere boredom, but yet much more alarming to the active man than bouts of pain.

One day in the Tea Room of the House of Commons he became involved in a heated discussion on the suppression of disturbances in Egypt. He wanted to quote a minister's utterance in Hansard. His finger was on the paragraph, but by some perversity his eyes could not read it. They could see all round it but the actual lines focused in the centre of vision were covered by a glowing star with a black zigzag outline. At the same time he felt as though he were slightly

stunned. Abruptly quitting the table he strode out, hatless, to a chemist near by, who by long usage had doctored many an M.P. As he went along his vision was most uncertain; his steps were also, and he was horribly afraid. The chemist required very little explanation. A tabloid and a strong dose of sal volatile, a sofa in the back parlour and half an hour's quiet enjoined. At the end of that time vision was normal, and though shaky, Eustace regained the House and then went home in a taxi, to bed and Baigent's sympathetic care.

In a few days he forgot this little seizure. "Merely migraine," said the doctor (a little puzzled, *quand même*). "Ate something too rich or greasy, I expect. How are your bowels? . . ."

And so on.

Months passed, and there was no return. But ever this tendency to lapse into hopeless tiredness, the tendency that has led man after man, statesman after statesman into alcoholism. Yet, every now and then, a bracing of the energies under some mental stimulus.

One day in the beginning of 1910, the House was to have an opportunity of discussing the Union of South Africa, and Eustace's heart was hot within him at the exclusion of millions of Negroes and Negroids from the suffrage, from citizenship. He let it be known, as widely as possible, that he wanted to speak on that subject, and he carefully prepared his notes. For a wonder he was allowed to speak. When he rose, the Speaker said gravely "Sir Eustace Morven." He glanced as he rose at the Treasury Bench. Yes: there was his special foe, the Colonial Secretary. He began, his voice vibrating with restrained passion. Yet behind it seemed a sub-voice saying "What *does* it all matter? A hundred years hence South Africa may be all *café-au-lait* in complexion, or all black or all white, despite *what* you say or do. . . ." But he pounded on, the House quiet, full, listening. Was it to be his triumph . . . at last? Then he had need to consult his notes. . . . Here were the figures. Misery! He could not see them. They were covered by a whirling Catherine wheel of black and gold. He raised his head. Any face he looked at seemed only half a face. He faltered. The Catherine wheels became two, four, eight, countless. He seemed to be standing amid a shower of gold. . . . Was he standing? No: he was lying on a bench in a lobby, and there was a smell of ether . . . or something . . . and his forehead was wet . . . and his shirt front sopping. Sir

Benjamin Stone—kindliest of souls—who photographed you when you were well and attended to you in the House when faint, was bending over him.

"*Now* you're better. This friend of ours knows where you live. He's got a taxi waiting and will see you home."

That, virtually, was Eustace Morven's last effective appearance in the House of Commons.

He had long realized that at the next election he would be turned out of Central Islington. He had spent far too little money there—£300 a year to his Agent and £200 to £300 a year additionally on Registration and bazaars, charities, cricket and football clubs, and friendly societies. Central Islington was sick of a freak member who belonged to no Party, had no "pull," and could not direct the spending of any national or civic funds on Central Islington.

As Eustace lay on the divan in the Orangery which had seen the last valid hours of Arthur Broadmead, with Baigent even more distressed now than then ; as he discussed his future with Suzanne and Paul, and dear, kindly Bella, he agreed with a sob of relief he would give up Parliament and consecrate his last years to his beloved studies and his beloved friends.

Bella one day hired a motor at Twickenham and brought her phlebitic William to see him. They filled all the glass bowls that Baigent could produce with bunches of William's prize pansies ; and they laughed over all that had happened to them and others from the November of 1884 to the great act on the boards of the Grand in December, 1905. Sir Wilfrid and Lady Abrahams, by the bye—happiest conjuncture—called that very afternoon to inquire, and Eustace made them stay to tea and join in the laughs.

Rupert Smith-Dombey—quite one of the handsomest young men Eustace had ever seen—had recently married Carinthia, grown into a lovely woman and expecting soon to be a mother. Of late he had been doing Eustace's work at the Dombey offices and looked in at No. 1 occasionally to report. Suzanne, who had been away with her eldest daughter Lady Kidderminster, seeing her safely through an accouchement, had asked Carinthia to go to Ebury Street ever and again and help Eustace with his convalescent tea parties. On one occasion they had Susan Knipper-Totes to tea. That veteran in the Woman's Cause spared them an hour from her militancy to describe how she had linked her sinewy arm in that of the Premier at the last Foreign Office party and had asked him at each

step of the grand staircase on their uneasy descent, "*When* are you going to give Women the *Vote?*"

When Suzanne a few days afterwards returned to town—Victor insisted on her retaining part of No. 52 Brook Street for her own use—she was able to say that Edith Kidderminster was now quite out of her trouble. This athletic lady, after a long series of mishaps and disappointments due to her persistently hunting, point-to-point riding, hockeying, jockeying, beagling, tennissing and motor bicycling, had at last found peace for body and soul in high-power motoring. Her few motor accidents left her unscathed: her position as Countess of Kidderminster and her plucky appearances in person and not through a solicitor had secured her exemption from unkindly verdicts. She was once more a mother. But this time, unlike her precipitate changeling first-born, her last child had extended its pre-natal experience to an abnormal length and had come into the world a giantess-in-grain.

Even Sir Victor Barnet-Skettles (as he was now called) came on behalf of the Foreign Office to inquire. And personally, also, because through his wife Portia he was, after all, affiliated with the Dombey clan. In confidence he said "Old man, we didn't treat you well, at all: I see that now I'm dashed sorry. But it's all turned out for the best. You've had a far more interesting time than if we'd given you a South American Legation. . . .

"By the bye, your friend Bax is laid by the heels at last. . . ."

"What did he get?" asked Eustace.

"Twelve months in the First Division . . . pretty stiff for Contempt of Court."

"What did you think about old Jimmy Tudell's end?" continued Barnet-Skettles.

"I only heard he died suddenly—last month, wasn't it? They wouldn't let me read the papers just then, so I really don't know how it happened. I saw him at the House just before I was ill myself, and strange to say in the early part of this year we grew rather chummy, in spite of Ubunyanza. He'd got something much bigger in hand with which I fully sympathized, the Channel Tunnel. I remember he was very wroth because Ministers burked all discussion of it in the House, frightened by that silly old War Office."

"Well," replied Barnet-Skettles, "he presided at a big meeting of protest at the Cannon Street Hotel, and in the middle of it had a fit—effusion of blood on the brain, the papers

said. He just lived to get back to Regent's Park. They say some very rum things took place at the funeral and over the reading of his will. But I've stayed long enough, old chap, and there's a devil of a lot to do at the Office. Things in Morocco and the Balkans look none too bright. Ta-ta ! "

One day, early in July, Suzanne appeared and brought with her a buxom, very well-dressed woman in black, her face (which bore a rather fluttering smile) reminiscent of things in his far back youth. " Eustace, this is Adela Tudell. She's been longing to know how you are, and I said this silly boycott must be broken, once and for all. So kiss and be friends. I'm sure you're quite old enough."

They did not kiss, but knew they were friends again without that. Eustace with very bright eyes pressed her hand till it almost hurt and she returned the pressure, with tears that brimmed over at the thought of ' darling Alfy ' and his favourite pupil and the golden long ago. But Baigent brought in the tea and there was a truce to sentimentality. Adela was rather anxious, she told them, about her youngest boy—just a *threatening* of tuberculosis ; but she thrilled them and made them laugh by her account of what had happened after her naughty old father-in-law's death.

" Lady Tudell didn't think it proper for females to attend funerals ; besides she was very ill. James was chief mourner, but when we entered the Chapel at Highgate Cemetery, we were puzzled at seeing two ladies like sham widows in deepest mourning and surrounded, each, by a party of young people, aged, say, from ten to twenty-five. They followed us to the grave and took up prominent positions there, threw clods on to the coffin, don't you know, and sobbed strenuously. The whole thing seemed so like a caricature of a funeral that I was terribly near laughing every now and then. I mean, it was so overdone. The two widows were veiled from head to foot in crape, so we couldn't see their faces. Almost, do you know, I thought at times—that horrid Bax—he wasn't in prison then—had out of spite got up this business to make Sir James ridiculous at the last ! Well, then. . . . After we got back to the house in Park Crescent . . . which, by the bye, is ours now, Jim's and mine—there were these two parties pushing their way into the hall. I was just about to say, ' Er —might I ask '—when the solicitor—(to Eustace)—I believe he's yours too ? The Robinson firm ; their uncle or cousin was a Latter-day Apostle, but they're great people in the City, and the senior member has a wonderful rock garden somewhere.

. . . Well, Mr. George Robinson said to me quietly: 'Hold on; I will explain things later.'

"So presently we were all assembled in the Library—Sir James's study, don't you know, and it smelt awfully of crape, we were so packed. And Mr. Robinson began to read the will. Fortunately Jim's mother was ill in bed, or the shock would certainly have killed her. Well: it seems Sir James had really had *three* wives, in a manner of speaking. Besides his legit., he had run two other establishments. There was a Mrs. Guinevere Brooks (not that she'd any right to the 'Mrs.') who kept a flourishing tobacco shop at Avonmouth —her youngest child was eighteen and her oldest a man of thirty. Avonmouth was once the terminus for the Direct Bristol Line . . . and . . . thanks, no more muffin, but I *will* have another cup of this delicious tea, and one of those 'fingers' . . . thanks. . . . And there was a Mrs. Emily Clapperton, a modiste in Paddington.

"You know, no doubt, that Sir James had six children from Lady Tudell, Jim's five brothers and sisters; all, I am bound to say, *most* uninteresting and *utterly* unlike Jim. Then there were five each from Mrs. Brooks and Mrs. Clapperton. They knew of course—now—that they were illegitimate, but they were well brought up and quite self-respecting. Their father had told their mothers there was a mystery which he could not clear up in his life-time, but that after his death they would find he had acknowledged them and provided for them in his will. Some months ago, he was taken faint at a meeting and regarded this symptom as a warning; so he had impressed on the solicitor that after his death these two other families should be invited to the funeral and to the house afterwards, to hear the will read. Well, they were all mentioned in the will by name—'my dear friend, Mrs. Guinevere Brooks, my dear friend, Mrs. Emily Clapperton, or my dear son or daughter So and So Brooks or Clapperton . . . besides, of course, all of *us*. And he'd divided his fortune pretty equally between all his sixteen children, and the three widows had Ten Thousand pounds apiece!

"James was left the residue of the property, the lease of the Park Crescnt house and the estate in Berkshire, subject to the condition that his mother was to live at Standstead.—He had always hoped to die 'Lord Stanstead'—for the rest of her days at James's expense. He left me, 'my dear daughter-in-law,' a special Ten thousand, so *that* rather softened my wrath! And actually remembered Bella!—'Five Thousand

pounds to my sister Mrs. William Strangeways, or, in the event of her pre-deceasing me, to her daughter and my niece, Edith McMaster. . . .' We were rather struck dumb when we contemplated the rival brothers and sisters, but the solicitor read in a very distinct manner a clause in the will which said, 'if my widow or any child of mine contests this will, all provisions in their favour are annulled and the money to which they might have been entitled shall be divided into three equal parts and given to the Zoological Society of London, the Egypt Exploration Fund, and the Railway Orphanage of the Great Western line. . . .'"

Suzanne. "But I suppose it wasn't a spoof will, such as one sometimes hears of—I mean, he really wasn't on the verge of bankruptcy, as people used to hint, after he had quarrelled with Bax? . . ."

Adela. "*Indeed* no. The lawyers say that when all the estate is realized, it will come to over £300,000; so even after the death duties and the legacies are paid, Jim and I will be quite well off. We shall sell the lease of 15 Park Crescent and take a small flat for our two selves in London, and make a home for the young people at Stanstead. Lady Tudell won't bother us much. Besides I always get on with her. We hurried her off to the country before she could hear about the other two families, because her belief in 'Sir James' was so profound that I think the knowledge of his rather mean joke would have killed her or sent her mad.

"As to the other families, everything has been settled *à l'amiable.* Wisest thing, don't you think so?"

Suzanne. "I suppose so; but it's a rum world. Nothing astonishes me now. My weak little gospel is: 'Be as happy as you can, provided you don't get in the way of other people being happy.' But I suppose I don't live up to it or I should leave the Suffrage alone and not distress Mr. Asquith or Lulu Grandcourt. . . .

"Somehow, other people's business seems to be thrust on me, and with the best intentions I *can't* leave their affairs alone and let them go to the devil their own way. I've meddled with Eustace's life quite enough, but I've always liked Eustace since you jilted him. What I can't understand in my calmer moments is *why* I take so much trouble over my brothers and sisters, seeing that with the exception of Paul, I really don't care about them. They are like tiresome characters in a novel. I should like to turn over the pages where they come in. And yet. . . .

" Now there's S. Edward Dombey, that pompous and important-looking clergyman. . . . He was, you know, the Rector of a City Church—an awful job, I fear . . . and a Canon of St. Paul's. Well, some years ago, when I had some influence with Lord W., Cornelia came pestering and begging me to speak for him because he *did* so want to be made Dean of Barchester. Portia was looking so peaky, and they thought if they could only move to Barchester. . . . Besides, it would be near the old Barnet-Skettles's place and they wanted *her* to marry Albert Victor. Well . . . much against my will I said a word to the great man, and the wish was granted. Would you believe it ? Corney Grain, as *I* call her—because she is the *antithesis* of dear old Corney Grain—whom I adored in the 'eighties—Corney Grain is now writing to me to get him made a *Bishop !*

" I simply took up my pen the other day—my new fountain pen which has ruined two blouses—and wrote ' Go to the Devil ' on a post card . . . and didn't post it !

" Then there's Lukey—You remember my ' Art ' sister, Adela ? "

Adela. " Of course. . . ."

Suzanne. " Lukey became really good at painting but wasn't content with that. After Father's death, when she got her money, she went quite mad on costume and colour and dressing up . . . and what was worse, showed signs of wanting to *un*dress at Quatre-z-Arts balls . . . or at least to be *very* diaphanous.

" Well, I introduced her to Pageantry—to L—— P—— and Gordon Craig ; and Victor's father and mother-in-law. . . . One's a scene-painter and the other designs theatrical costumes. *Now* she's perfectly happy. Paul has seen to it that her capital is locked up, so she can only waste her nine or ten hundred a year. She's going to be Queen Elizabeth at Brighton next week and ride a white palfrey for some rotten charity. . . .

" Then again, there's Percy Dombey. His poetry was *preposterous* though it was once the fashion. Every now and then, when I am inclined to sadness I take out a volume and shriek with laughter. . . . I remember, Eustace, your mother saw the absurdity of it and forgot it was Sunday in her merriment, dear old soul. . . . Well that kind of loathly, fleshly, pomegranate sort of verse went out of fashion, and Percy took to writing plays, most unpleasant plays about diseases and social problems. Somehow he got turned out of the *Sunday*

Review, and that made him all the more bitter against 'Convention.' At last the Sunday Society wouldn't produce his plays, even on a Sunday . . . and I thought he was taking to drugs. But I've actually persuaded him and Lukey to join forces in house-keeping—in Chelsea; and Percy has developed quite a talent for cookery; so that while Lukey roams abroad on a white palfrey, trying to look like Queen Elizabeth, Percy is keeping house and producing poems from casseroles and chafing-dishes.

"Then again, there's Fanny . . . Frances. I haven't told you, Yusy, *all* my reasons for being away so much this Spring. It was partly Fanny. I was much 'vrothered,' as Sussex people say, about her. At one of Lady Clarice Goldmann's Occult meetings, where they paw one another in the dark—Clarice was a daughter of that Towcester woman—she had an unhappy marriage but *he* fortunately died and left her very rich—Fanny picked up a Mahatma . . . a *fruitarian* Mahatma, she said to me, as though *that* made it any better! . . . and *simply went to live with him* in a pokey part of St. John's Wood, one of those mysterious Sherlock-Holmesy houses that give you the creeps, painted dark slate colour, shut up in a walled garden, where you feel that the most horrible rites might take place. . . . And she was *quite* sixty! . . .

"It was Susan K.-T. who spotted her retreat . . . saw her going in one day with a string bag full of apples. . . . She told me; and Paul and I went one morning to see her. We managed fortunately to get in as they never expected callers at that hour. . . . He was rather cringy, she was defiant and quite inclined to lock herself in her room.

"Of course he wasn't a Tibetan any more than I am, but an American from South Dakota, though very Mongolian looking. He declared, however, he'd been educated at Lhasa—I can't say—but he took up a very sensible attitude of conforming with the social laws of the land you're going to settle down in. Paul pointed out, of course, that if there were no extant Mrs. Mahatma, a little ceremony before a registrar would satisfy all parties and make things pleasant. He was only too willing, because he evidently understands that her nine hundred a year will always keep him in nuts and apples. . . . Paul, of course, will see that her capital is vested in trustees. The old fool has been *quite* happy since, and they're going to take a more cheerful dwelling. . . .

"By the bye, that reminds me of Diana's Hostel. . . ."

Eustace. "Diana's been here several times whilst you were

away. When my head was bad, she read Longfellow aloud to me. You know she reads very well ; and really Longfellow's *quite* good in parts . . . ' Evangeline ' . . . ' Hiawatha.' . . .

"I thought somehow there was change in the air, but as I once got turned down over asking, I didn't ask. . . ."

Suzanne. "Well, the fact is that dear Di, who always marches with the times, found that women weren't ' falling ' any more. They put their babies out to nurse or in a *crêche* for the week days, and then went to work in tea-shops or cinemas. . . .

"So she wound it all up and has now donated the house to our W.S.P.U., as a Home of Rest for weary militants. . . ."

Baigent. "The doctor, Sir Eustace. . . ."

Suzanne. "Goodness ! We've been here two hours and a half. . . . Adela, I'll drive you home. *Do* go and call on poor old Fanny Mahatma when I know her new address ? . . ."

Doctor. "Don't hurry on my account, Lady Feenix. You're doing him all the good in the world so long as you talk and he listens. How's pulse ? . . . Excellent ! . . .

"Well, Sir Eustace : I'm off to Switzerland for a holiday and just looked in to give you my last instructions. You'll do well now. Very different to poor Arthur Broadmead. But remember ! you've promised to quit Parliament and live as much as you can in the country."

So Sir Eustace recovered, and in the autumn fixed on a delicious little abode with twelve acres of delightful grounds in Gloucestershire, an easy bicycle ride from Suzanne's Dower House, near Tewkesbury. Mrs. Baigent's niece and her husband would manage for him at the "Orangery"—as they all agreed to call No. 1, Ebury Street—and the faithful Baigent and his no less excellent wife would be the nucleus of the cottage household in Gloucestershire. All this could be afforded by his detachment from the leeches of Central Islington. He could come up to London for Dombey Office business and board meetings and for his scientific societies and the fun of the fair 'twixt Easter and Whitsun.

From the summer of 1910 to the outbreak of war in August, 1914, passed the four happiest years in Eustace Morven's life. He joined with Suzanne and Paul in doing good in many ways that were seemingly erratic, yet really followed some direct purpose of making unhappy persons happy, warping a deepening tragedy into something safe and comfortable, making fast people go slow and the narrow minded see the glory that lay behind the bars of honest doubt.

CHAPTER XXIV

VALEDICTORY

IN August, 1914, Sir Eustace Morven, casting all considerations of health on one side, deeply moved at the peril in which the British Empire stood, offered his services in any capacity to the Foreign Office . . . and failing to get an answer from them, to the Colonial Office, India Office, War Office . . . with like result. The fact was (he believed) that a small *coterie*, informal committee of one or two Ministers, a few departmental officials, a few private secretaries and two or three journalists had met together and decided: "This is *our* War . . . and we can run it without the help of outsiders. . . . We can do it on our heads. . . . We've got the Germans beat (This was before the panic of 'Eyewitness'), etc., etc."

The self-confidence of the Camarilla, shaken on August 26th, was restored by the Battle of the Marne, and the result was that a good many persons like Eustace Morven who might have been of use were, in the first two years of the War, overlooked or sent purposely on wild-goose chases (so at least, Countess Feenix said).

But when the Anglo-French expedition to conquer the Cameroons was being organized on a large scale to redeem the opening disasters, Eustace could restrain his impatience no longer. He was convinced that his geographical and ethnological knowledge of the regions through which the fighting and negotiating would occur, must be of material use to the British or the French. Therefore he intimated to the public offices most concerned his intention of starting for West Africa to place his services at the disposal of the commanding officers of the expedition. As no measures were taken either to restrain him or to encourage him, he sailed in the spring of 1915 accompanied by Baigent, and having said good-bye to no one except Paul. He felt he could not stand the strain of these farewells, lest they weakened his resolution. He was 65, and his impulse from a health point of view was a mad one, as Paul warned him.

So his departure in the S.S. *Abontiakun* attracted little notice. Suzanne didn't know he had gone till a week afterwards, when Paul duly handed her his farewell letter. The S.S. *Abontiakun* was torpedoed or struck a mine, or floundered in her navigation and struck a rock off one of the Canary Islands, and there were only thirteen survivors, among them neither Eustace nor the faithful Baigent. So there was an end of them, unless there is continuity in the after life.

Perhaps you think that in the Greek ending of our play, the wicked Baxendale Strangeways likewise made a tragic exit before or after the outbreak of the War? Not at all. When he came out of prison in 1911 (it had been First division and a Persian carpet and meals served from a restaurant) he was met at the prison gates by his ever forgiving wife, in her uncle's motor and a nice fur coat for " Baxy " because it was a chilly April day. And, together, they drove down to a dear little place in the Chilterns which Mrs. Strangeways had taken and furnished. Her trustees having intervened in time, she had at least a thousand a year (the average income we all ought to possess) ; and on that they are living quite happily. Baxy was touched through his rhinoceros-hided conscience at his wife's goodness ; besides, he was either stone deaf or had lost the sight of one eye or suffered unimaginable pain from varicose veins. At any rate, he let her garden peacefully while he applied himself to the translating of Lope de Vega. He had acquired—and never lost—a thorough knowledge of Spanish in the Argentina. He has also brought out a small *History of the Tango*, but that fell flat because it was published in September, 1914. He will probably live a few years longer, and has already made amends here and there by sending back, unasked, compromising documents to persons who had ceased to think about their past in their agony of mind over the events of the War.

Fanny Mahatma's husband, six years younger than Fanny, turned out to be the son of an American missionary in Tibet (The Revd. Jacob Sigsbee) who had married a Tibetan. He really *did* know that language ; so when the *Daily Mail* got up all that row about the retention of clever Germans in the service of our Departments of State, and the German Translator of Tibetan Documents at the British Museum was occluded or interned, Suzanne by speaking to this one and that got the post for Fanny's husband. Its interest and importance soon weaned him from the foolish pursuits of dubious occultism (chucked, for the matter of that, by Lady Clarice

Goldmann, who was running a hospital), and he and his elderly but quite happy wife went to live in the brighter part of Bloomsbury. The Food Control that followed soon reduced the eccentricities of his diet and standardized his colon ; so that he now eats pretty much what you and I do, and is thankful to get it.

Percy Dombey was sent to America by the Minister of Propaganda to lecture on the British Empire. As he had never seen any part of the Empire save the southern half of England, and as he had a weak voice, he made no impression on the Americans. But he was too conceited to notice that, and returned, untorpedoed, and pleased as Punch. He has since contributed patriotic verse to *The Times* and *Cornhill* and has written a spy play of blood-curdling vigour. So the War has done *him* good.

Lucrece similarly advanced from palfreying in processions to directing a branch of the mule transport in France, and did it uncommonly well. She has returned, a bronzed, bright-eyed, man-woman of unknown potentialities—possibly Parliament.

William Strangeways died of his phlebitis just before the War began, and Bella, very much crippled with rheumatoid arthritis, went to live with her daughter—or rather at her daughter's house to look after her grandchildren ; for Edith McMaster's husband was taken over by the War Office and Edith herself looked after a large section of the Y.M.C.A. work in France. On her return she was adopted as a Parliamentary candidate by South Hampstead. That dear old veteran, Susan Knipper-Totes was chosen to represent Labour for South Marylebone, but more *honoris causā* than with any hope that she may be able to sit for that constituency in the reformed Parliament : for she is now 73.

Rupert Smith-Dombey, or Rupert S. Dombey, as he was gradually calling himself, joined the Army when war was declared and soon got a Commission. His promotion was rapid, and when in 1916 a shell killed him outside La Bassée he was already a major. This loss took half the interest in life away from Paul, his father, and Diana who had grown to feel herself his mother. He had left two little sons, to be sure and both Lord and Lady Goring would be keenly interested grandparents, even though their daughter-in-law spends much of her time with Suzanne.

But somehow after this loss following on the death of Eustace and the ageing or indifference of the Chicks and the other

directors, Paul decided that at last the *Dombey Line* must become a public and a limited liability concern. Whilst meditating over this, the boom in shipping brought to his private room at the Office the great Mr. Zachary Smith, who from being a virtual nobody in August, 1914, now controlled millions and took your breath away. T. Zachary Smith—oh the potency of the Smiths, from Neolithic times onwards !—made Paul an offer there was no refusing. The *Dombey Line* was bought out-and-out, in little more time than it would take you to select and buy a type-writer ; and henceforth lost its identity in a vast shipping combination which covered the Atlantic, the Indian and the Pacific Oceans with its fleets. That was the end of DOMBEY AND SON. Rupert's boys will be immensely rich when they come of age, unless by that time Bolshevism levels all fortunes. May it never do so, for Life will then become too dull, and ambition will be strangled at birth.

Meantime Paul—Lord Goring—is devoting a substantial portion of his great wealth to the improvement of our national and imperial education ; to regenerating—creating, it really is—a Ministry of Education ; and forcing on the attention of our Government the supreme importance of Botany, Ethnology, Anthropology, Zoology, Entomology, Ornithology, Ichthyology, Egyptology, Modern Languages, and Modern History, Geography and Pathology in the schedule of subjects to be taught intelligibly at our Public Schools and Universities. Diana, similarly, is applying *her* energies and her American wealth to the better education of Women for their new responsibilities. She makes a model grandmother for Rupert's children, and in spite of her age—not much exceeding Suzanne's —she might well represent—only nothing would induce her to do so—the figure of Columbia, matured, spiritualized and enriched in wisdom by her participation in the Great War.

Countess Feenix felt Eustace's death terribly, more than any other sorrow that had crossed her life. "I ought to have married him in 1908 and afterwards not let him out of my sight." Her hair swiftly changed from grey to white, but it is still a fine head of hair and she still looks a noble woman, of the finest Anglo-Norman type. The death of Major Rupert Smith-Dombey was another numbing blow ; but fortunately she has Carinthia to live with her part of the year, and her two darling grandchildren. At the time of writing I guess her to be about 66, at any rate she makes no secret of the fact that she was born in 1853. Fortunately,

her vigorous health shows no sign of abatement. She has been given a high grade in the Order of the British Empire for her splendid activities during the war—hospital organization chiefly.

But when the War-stress lessened somewhat her thoughts dwelt more and more on the people of her past life. She wished them to live again, however inadequately, between the pages of a book. Eustace had left her in his brief will all he possessed, subject to provision for the Baigents ; and had above all made her his literary executrix.

Soon after there was no hope of Sir Eustace having survived the wrecking of the *Abontiakun*, Countess Feenix handed over to me the papers of my one-time friend and colleague. In the first decade of this century I had come to know him well. A common interest in Africa and in Ornithology had drawn us together. I also had been a pupil of Lacrevy's and had known most of the people Eustace knew. We had had long talks in my garden and at the Orangery, or at Paul Dombey's, not far from where I live. Much that appears in this book was learnt from him orally ; the remainder being put together from his letters and books, and from permissible guess work ; also from the fragmentary portions of an unfinished autobiography which he began in the last years of his life.

Lady Feenix wanted something to be written which might perpetuate Eustace Morven's memory, the memory most of all of his *type ;* yet she hated the conventional biography, the stereotyped " Life and Letters," the central figure of which is always portrayed as impeccable. Morven himself was a man of very original mind, and singularly candid. I can't quite understand yet why he was a comparative failure. Perhaps he spread himself too much. Lady Feenix felt that he should be painted against a full background of his times and of the set amongst which he moved ; and that if I changed names and masked faces the vicissitudes of his friends, enemies, and acquaintances, of all who crossed his path and passed in and out of his correspondence might be truthfully related.

Thus to those who had known Eustace Morven much that they did not understand might be made clear. At any rate there would result a true human document which in this age of well-arranged falsity would have about it the breath of novelty. " Make it, indeed, a novel if you like," she has said to me, " many of us will possess the key."

Most of the young people mentioned in this history of the Gay-Dombeys have died for their country, in some way or

another. Others—bad and good—who pass through my pages have passed out of life. I do not think there remain any persons—or places—who could wince at my portraiture or at the revival under their eyes of the joys and sorrows of long ago.

THE END

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